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**THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.**

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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

WITH NOTES CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL

BY THE REV. M. F. SADLER

LATE RECTOR OF HONITON AND PREBENDARY OF WELLS



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## INTRODUCTION.

### THE SCOPE OF THE ACTS.

**I**N considering the scope of the Acts, or rather the purpose of St. Luke in writing it, we must, at the outset, separate between two things—the intention of St. Luke in giving to the Church such a narrative, and the intention of the Holy Spirit under whose guiding or inspiration he wrote. St. Luke's intention was apparently very simple, whereas that of the Spirit was manifold.

St. Luke's design is apparent. It was to give an account of the spread of the Gospel, and the planting of the Church throughout the world, in the order mentioned by the Lord in Acts i. 8: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

First, there was the witness in Jerusalem, in St. Peter's first sermon (ch. ii.), in the miracle of the healing of the lame man (ch. iii.), in the testimony before the chief priests (chs. iv. and v.), in the ordination of the Seven, and the preaching of Stephen (vi. vii.). Then there was the witness in all Judæa: "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the word" (viii. 4).

Then the door of faith was opened to the Samaritans; and after their evangelization and confirmation by Peter and John, Philip converted a leading man of the Ethiopians, a religious proselyte, and then he proclaimed the Gospel in the cities adjoining the sea coasts till he came to Cæsarea.

Then we have the full account of the greatest event in the history of the progress of the Gospel since the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost, namely, the conversion of St. Paul. Close upon this we have the most important advance in the same direction, in the conversion and baptism of Cornelius. Then this is followed up by the founding of a virtually Gentile Church in Antioch, and the mission

of Barnabas there, and his search after Saul, and their united labours in the place where the disciples of the Lord were first called Christians (xi. 19-26). Then, notwithstanding the apparent check through the persecution commenced by Herod, and the martyrdom of James, the Word of God grew and multiplied (xii. 24).

Then we have the ordination of Paul and his companion, and the first missionary journey in which the ship of the Gospel is fairly launched on the sea of outside heathenism (xiii.). Then the first great internal difficulty in the history of the Church—the opposition to the acknowledgment of the equality of the Gentiles—is overcome, and the schism which seemed imminent is averted; then the second missionary journey, embracing Macedonia and its cities, and Athens, and Corinth (xvi. xvii. xviii.); then the third missionary journey, including a prolonged stay in Ephesus (xix.); and another journey through Macedonia and Greece.

The last eight chapters are occupied with what appears at first sight a serious hindrance to the spread of the Gospel, namely, the imprisonment of St. Paul for above two years in Cæsarea; but this was his safety, for if he had been one day at large, and not under Roman protection, he would have been a dead man; and the course of events was so ordered as to bring about the accomplishment (though by means little expected by him) of his earnest desire to see the Church of Rome, and build up the faith in the centre of the world.

So that this Book of the Acts records the establishment of the Church in most of the world's great cities—in Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Antioch, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and in Rome.

But besides this, at least four other purposes which were in the mind of the Spirit were fulfilled in the writing of the Acts.

1st. It is a faithful record of the bitter and implacable enmity of the Jews, which increased in malignity as the signs of the finger of God in the work of the Apostles became more and more manifest.

It might be said to commence on the day of Pentecost itself, when the most stupendous work of the Holy Spirit on the mind of man was alleged to be the effect of drunkenness. Again, it was manifested in the persons of the Sadducean high priests, when, not being able to deny the truth of the miracle of the healing of the lame man, they commanded the Apostles to speak no more in the Name of Jesus. Then, again, it was roused into madness at the

speech of Stephen. Then, when Saul was converted, instead of candidly inquiring into the grounds of so astonishing a change, they "took counsel to kill him:" and, again, "they went about to slay him" (ix. 23, 29).

Then King Herod, simply in order to ingratiate himself with them, killed one Apostle, and attempted the life of another. Then throughout the missionary journeyings of St. Paul, they excited against him the enmity, first of his own people, then of the heathen. And in the last chapters this mad hatred seems to have become diabolical in its fierceness. The people attempted to tear him to pieces, and the high priest openly connived at attempts to assassinate him. And all this for no other reason than that he preached Christ as the Saviour of all men, and that all might be one in Him.

The Book of the Acts, then, is a vindication of God's dealings in the temporary casting away of His ancient people. It shows the grounds for the severity of God. "They pleased not God, and were contrary to all men, forbidding Christ's Apostles to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved," in this filling up the measure of their own and their fathers' sin; and so "wrath came upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16).

Then (2), concurrently with this is a manifestation of the Personal action of the Holy Ghost such as had hitherto not been vouchsafed to men: so much so that this book has been called the Gospel of the Holy Ghost.

It commences with a renewal of the promise of the descent of the Spirit. "Wait," He says, "for the promise of the Father." "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (i. 4, 5, 8); then we have the personal descent of the Spirit, and the manifestation of His presence in the tongues of fire and the power to speak in all known languages; then the fulfilment of a prophecy respecting the pouring out of the Spirit in all this; and the further promise of the same Spirit to all that heard the Word (ii. 1-5, 17, 33, 38). Then Ananias and Sapphira, lying, not to men, but to the Holy Ghost, and so to God, are struck dead; then comes the joint witness of the Apostles and Holy Ghost (v. 1-9, 32); then the reproach of Stephen that as their fathers did, so the Jews also now resisted the Holy Spirit (vii. 51); then the Samaritans receive the Spirit (viii. 17, 18); and the Spirit commands Philip to evangelize the Eunuch and then removes him (viii. 29, 39); then Peter,



by the special direction of the Spirit, goes to Cornelius (x. 19); then the Holy Ghost personally commands the ordination of Paul and Barnabas, and Himself personally sends them forth (xiii. 2, 4); then the decree of the Church is expressed in the words "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (xv. 28); then in the second missionary journey the Spirit interfered to forbid Paul to preach the word in Asia, and suffered him not to go into Bithynia (xvi. 6, 7); then the elders of Ephesus are addressed as those whom the Holy Ghost had made overseers of the flock (xx. 28), and in the last chapter the Deity and Personality of the same Spirit are asserted in the words, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers" (xxviii. 25).

8. But though the Book of the Acts thus clearly brings out the Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit, yet all is subordinate to the manifestation of the power of a risen and ascended Christ. Christ, though in heaven, is present "in spirit and in power." It is He Who disposes the lot and so assigns to Matthias the ministry and apostleship of the traitor. He it is Who having received from the Father the promise of the Spirit, shed forth that which they saw and heard. In His Name the lame man rises up and walks. His Name through faith in His Name made the man strong, and not the power or holiness of Peter and John (iii. 6, 16). It is He Who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour (v. 31). It is He Who receives the spirit of the first martyr (vii. 59). It is He Who rends the veil between the visible and invisible world, and strikes Saul to the earth and converts him by His word, and sends Ananias to console him and restore to him his sight. Then Peter says to Æneas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole" (ix. 34). Then the Lord sent the vision of the sheet full of clean and unclean creatures, and Himself commands him to "kill and eat" (x. 13). Then the Lord, that is Jesus, sent His angel and delivered Peter (xii. 11). Then at Corinth He appears to Paul to reassure him for that "He was with him," and that He had much people in Corinth, whom the Apostle must bring into His fold (xviii. 9). Then the Lord stood by His servant and again reassured him, and promised that he should witness to Him in Rome, which He brought about by His Almighty Power and Providence (xxiii. 11).

So that throughout this book there is the personal action of the Spirit, but never without Christ, and the power of a risen and ascended Christ, but not without the Spirit.

4. Another design of the Spirit in the Inspiration of the Acts was to form a connecting link between the work and teaching of the Saviour personally in the Gospels and the teaching of the same Divine Saviour in the Epistles of His principal ministers. Some of the Epistles of St. Paul would be well nigh unintelligible without the introduction to them which we have in the Book of the Acts. Now when we consider that in the Epistles we have the power of a risen and ascended Christ brought home to the souls of men as the greatest conceivable attracting and sanctifying power, we can form some idea of the importance of this book as the history of the foundation of that Holy Catholic Church, in which and for which, as the Body of Christ, the Apostles lived and laboured.

## INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL NOTES.

### UNCIAL MSS. OF THE ACTS.

ⲁ	Codex Sinaiticus, see Introduction to St. Matthew,	p. xxiii.
A.	Cod. Alexandrinus, " " "	p. xxiii.
B.	Cod. Vaticanus, " " "	p. xxiv.
C.	Cod. Ephræmi Syri Rescriptus, " "	p. xxiv.
D.	Cod. Bezaë.	p. xxv.

Of this last (Cod. D) Canon Cook in his introduction to the Acts, writes, "It is conspicuous for interpolations throughout the Gospels; in the Acts more than 600 are enumerated. To a great extent they are absolutely peculiar to this MS. and are rejected by all critics: so many of them, however, are in the early Italic versions as to make it all but certain that this singular MS. represents a very ancient recension, and when, as is the case in some passages of peculiar interest, the so-called interpolations are found in so ancient and important a writer as Irenæus, they should not be set aside as unworthy of consideration, though cautious critics are not likely to introduce them into a revised text."

E. Cod. Laudianus of the Acts. Bodleian Library at Oxford, century sixth. Scrivener conjectures that it was brought into England by no less a person than Theodore of Tarsus. At all events Mill (N. T. prolegomena, § 1002-6) has rendered it all but certain that the Venerable Bede (A.D. 735) had this very codex

before him when he wrote his *Expositio Retractata* of the Acts. This MS. contains only the Acts (xxvi. 29—xxviii. 26 being wanting).

F. Cod. Coislinianus, seventh century, contains only four small portions, viz., iv. 33-34; ix. 24, 25; x. 13, 15; xxii. 22.

G. Contains only one octavo leaf of seventh century, Acts ii. 45—iii. 8.

H. Cod. Mutinensis contains the Acts, but is defective in the following places:—i. 1—v. 28; ix. 39—x. 18; xiii. 37—xiv. 2; xxvii. 4—xxvii. 31.

I. Cod. Petropolitan contains only a few fragments.

L. Cod. Biblioth. Angelicæ contains Acts from viii. 10 to the end.

P. Cod. Porphyrianus contains the Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse, ninth century ("according to Dr. Hort the text of the Acts is a very late type." Scrivener.)

252 Cursive Codices of the Acts and Catholic Epistles are enumerated in Scrivener's third edition. According to a note in Canon Cook's "Introduction to the Acts," he classifies them thus:—

First class: Cod. 13, 31, 61, 137, 40, a<sup>scr</sup>, c<sup>sr</sup>, B—C, iii. 37. Lectionary xii.

Second class: Cod. 1, 27, 29, 36, and Cat. 57, secund. man. 66, marg. 68, 69, 81, 96, 100, 133, 180.

### CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES.

EMPERORS OF ROME.	PROCURATORS.	HIGH PRIESTS.
Tiberius A.D. 14-37.	A.D. 26-36	Caiaphas . 25
Caligula A.D. 37, to Jan. 24, 41.	Herod Agrippa, K. 41-44	Jonathan . 37
Claudius A.D. 41, to Oct. 13, 54.	Cuspius Fadus . . 44-47	Theophilus 39
Nero . A.D. 54, to June 9, 68.	Ventidius Cumanus 47-53	Simon . . 42
	Felix . . . . . 53-60	Matthias . —
	Festus . . . . . 60-61	Elionæus . 43
		Joseph . . 45
		Ananias . 47
		Ishmael . 59
		Joseph . . 61
		Ananus . 62

	Baronius.	Usher.	Bengel.	Michaelis.	De Wette.	Olshausen.	Wieseler.	Ewald.	Alford.	Wordsworth
Crucifixion and Ascension of Christ (Acts i.) . . . . .	32	33	30	33	—	33	30	33	30	30
Martyrdom of Stephen (vii.) .	32	33	30	—	—	—	39?	38	37	33
Conversion of St. Paul (ix.) . .	34	35	31	37?	37 or 38	35	40	38	37	34
St. Paul at Jerusalem (ix. 26)	37	38	33	—	—	38	43	41	39-40	37
Conversion of Cornelius (x.) . .	37	38	—	—	—	—	—	—	38-40	40 or 41
Paul at Antioch (xi. 26) . . . .	41	43	39	—	43-4	41	44	44	41	43
Death of James and Herod (xii.)	42	44	42	about 44	44	—	44	44	44	44
St. Paul's first Missionary Journey through Cyprus, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, and back through same places to Antioch (xiii. xiv.) . . . .	44-7	45-6	45-6	—	—	48-9	45-7	48-51	45-7	45-6
The Council at Jerusalem (xv.)	49	52	47	—	50 or 51	52	about 50	52	50	50
St. Paul's second Missionary Journey begins (xv. 40)	49	53	47	—	51-2	52	about 50	52	51 or 52	52
St. Paul at Corinth (xviii.) . .	50	54	48	54?	52-3	53	52	53	53-4	52-3
St. Paul's third Missionary Journey (xviii. 23) . . . . .	52	56	49	—	53 or 54	55	54	55	55 &c.	54?
St. Paul at Ephesus (xix.) . . . .	53-5	56-9	50-2	—	54 or 55	56 or 57	54-7	57-8	55-7	54-7
St. Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, and commencement of his imprisonment (xxi.) .	56	60	53	60	58 or 59	60	58	59	59	58-60
St. Paul's removal from Cæsarea to Rome (xxvii.) . . .	56	62	55	62	60 or 61	62	60	61	60	60
End of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome (xxviii. 31) .	59	65	58	65	64	65	64	64	63	63

## AUTHENTICITY OF THE BOOK OF THE ACTS.

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles commences with a dedication to Theophilus, the same person to whom St. Luke had addressed his Gospel, and so it has been understood from the first to have been written by the author of the third Gospel, for he alludes to his Gospel as "his former treatise," and the style of the two books, and the number of words (especially medical terms) common to each, would warrant us to conclude that the writer of the Gospel is also the writer of the Acts.

Ecclesiastical history assures us of the same fact. We need not go later than Eusebius, in whose Ecclesiastical History, iii. 25, we read the following: "This appears also to be the proper place to give a summary statement of the books of the New Testament already mentioned. And here among the first must be placed the Holy Quaternion of the Gospels; these are followed by the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, after this must be mentioned the Epistles of St. Paul, which are followed by the acknowledged First Epistle of John, &c. These then are acknowledged as genuine." This is the testimony of a writer whose work is as much a literary history of the Church before his time, as it is a record of progress or of martyrdom. He looks upon the Acts as an undoubted book received from the first.

Dating back from his time we come to the three great Christian divines of the end of the second century, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Irenæus, who quote the Acts with the same confidence as any author now would do.

Clement writes, "And in the Acts of the Apostles you will find this word for word, 'Those then who received his word were baptized'" (Acts ii. 41; Miscell. i. ch. xviii.). Again, speaking of Moses, he writes, "whence in the Acts he is said 'to have been instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians'" (Acts vii. 22; Miscell. i. ch. xxiii.). Again, "Further, Peter in the Acts says, 'of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him'" (Acts x. 34, 35; Miscell. vi. ch. viii.). Clement flourished

about A.D. 180, and could not have been born later than the third decade of the century.

A second, Tertullian, flourished also at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century. Dr. Pusey considers that his conversion in middle life took place about A.D. 196.

Three or four references will be amply sufficient. "At that time when He was received up into heaven, the angels said to the Apostles that He should 'so come in like manner as He went up into heaven'" (De Bapt. viii. 20). Again, "immediately therefore the Apostles (whom this title intendeth to denote as sent), having chosen by lot a twelfth, Matthias into the room of Judas on the authority of a prophecy" (De Præscr. Hær. ch. xx.). Again, "The first pouring of the Holy Spirit on the assembled disciples was at the third hour" (Acts ii. 15). "Peter on the day in which he experienced the vision of every sort of common thing in that vessel had gone up into the housetop to pray at the sixth hour (Acts x. 9). He again, with John, went into the temple at the ninth hour, when he restored the paralytic to his soundness," Acts iii. 1. (De Orat. ix. 26).

Lastly, in his treatise against Marcion, speaking of St. Paul he writes, "He then cursorily touches on his own conversion from a persecutor to an Apostle—confirming thereby the Acts of the Apostles, in which book may be found the very subject of this Epistle, how that certain persons interposed and said that men ought to be circumcised," &c. (Book v. ch. ii.).

And thirdly, Irenæus who was born early in the second century, and published his work against heresies between A.D. 182 and 188.

In the third book of this work he gives a *résumé* of a large portion of the first part of the Acts, noticing the filling up of the number of the Apostles; the descent of the Holy Ghost; the accusation that they who spake with tongues were drunken; the citation of the prophecy of Joel; St. Peter's sermon; St. Peter's commanding those who believed to be baptized; the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate; St. Peter's address to the astonished multitudes given in full; St. Peter's address to the rulers, the disciples lifting up their voices with one accord to God; the accounts of the conversion of Cornelius and the words of St. Peter, "of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons;" the preaching of Philip and the baptism of the Eunuch; St. Paul's speech at the Areopagus; the preaching of St. Stephen; the account of his martyr-

dom; his prayer for his enemies; the account of the council about circumcision. All these are to be found in one chapter (the twelfth) of the third book.

Throughout the rest of the book the references are numerous, but these are sufficient.

In the Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienna to those of Asia and Phrygia, quoted in full by Eusebius, book v. ch. i.-iv. (A.D. 177) there is the following direct reference to the Acts: "they prayed for those who were so bitter in their hostility, like Stephen that perfect martyr, 'Lord, impute not this sin to their charge.' But if he prayed for those who stoned him, how much more for the brethren."

Again, in what is called the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170) St. Luke is there mentioned as the author of the Acts, "*Acta autem omnium apostolorum sub uno libro scripta sunt. Lucas optime Theophilo comprehendit, quia sub presentia ejus singula gerebantur.*" I give the Latin as corrected by Dr. Westcott.

Irenæus was a younger contemporary of Justin Martyr, who flourished in the middle of the century. If three men, writing within half a century after Justin, treat the Acts of the Apostles in the same way as we now do, as an integral part of Scripture—then it gives us the greatest confidence that words and phrases which seem to be derived from the Acts, and which are to be found in no other book, were actually references to that book. It is to be remembered that it was not Justin's design to honour the disciples, but only the Master. The words and acts of the Master alone were authoritative, if any could be, with those for whose sake Justin wrote.

We may be certain then that Justin refers to Acts iv. 25, 28, when he writes, Apol. i. 40, "And we have thought it right and relevant to mention some other prophetic utterances of David besides these; from which you may learn how the spirit of prophecy exhorts men to live, and how he foretold the conspiracy which was formed against Christ by Herod the King of the Jews, and the Jews themselves, and Pilate, who was your governor among them, with his soldiers." Again, he most certainly refers to Luke xxiv. and Acts i. combined in Apol. i. 50. "Afterwards, when He had risen from the dead, and appeared to them, and had taught them to read the prophecies in which all these things were foretold as coming to pass" [Luke xxiv. 45, 46, 47], and when they had

seen Him ascending into heaven, and had believed, and had received power sent thence by Him upon them, &c.

Again, there cannot be the least doubt that Justin, Dial. 68, refers to Acts ii. 30, for in the quotation from Psalm cxxxii. Justin, instead of citing it in the words of the Septuagint, *ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς κοιλίας*, uses St. Peter's translation *ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς σπύουος*, which is nowhere else to be found except in Acts ii.

Again, when Justin in Dial. ch. xx. uses the words, "we refrain, from eating some [herbs] not because they are common or unclean," he uses a collocation of words not found anywhere except in Acts x. 17. Each of the words "common" and "unclean" are used by themselves in multitudes of places, but only in this single place in combination.

Again, in the hortatory address to the Greeks, ch. x., Justin certainly has a distinct reminiscence of Acts vii. 22, when he writes, "Moses was not only born, but also was thought worthy of partaking of all the education of the Egyptians."

Now, it is to be remembered, that each of these, slight though some may seem, is a reference to a book which was looked upon by one contemporary of Justin, Irenæus, and by two that might almost be called his contemporaries, Tertullian and Clement, as a book of Scripture.

There seems to be a quotation from the Acts in the Epistle of Polycarp, date uncertain, but very early in the second century, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, for our sins, suffered even unto death, whom God raised from the dead, having loosed the pains of the grave." (Cf. Acts ii. 24.)

So that there is a succession of references to the book to within three quarters of a century or so after its publication, and Irenæus and Justin could have conversed with persons who in their youth could have seen the Evangelist.

Taking then into consideration its universal acceptance by the Church, its close connection with the Pauline Epistles as brought out in the *Horæ Paulinæ*, and that its style and vocabulary are indubitably the same as that of the Gospel of St. Luke, we assert that there is no book of the New Testament of which we have greater certainty of the genuineness and authenticity. Besides this, "the surprisingly abridged and abrupt conclusion of the book, and the silence concerning the last labours and fate of the Apostle Paul, as well as the silence concerning the similar fate of St. Peter, are



phenomena which are intelligible only on the supposition of a real and candid companion of the Apostle being prevented by circumstances from continuing his narrative, but would be altogether inconceivable in the case of an author not writing till the second century, and manipulating with a definite design the historical materials before him—inconceivable because utterly at variance with his supposed designs " (Meyer).

# A COMMENTARY.

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

### CHAP. I.

THE former treatise have I made, O <sup>a</sup>Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, \* Luke i. 3.

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1. "Have I made." Rather "I made."

1. "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began," &c. St. Luke commences his Book of the Acts with a short preface, containing an allusion to his former work, "the former, [or first] treatise, have I made, O Theophilus;" but when we come to compare the two we find that whereas in the preface to the Gospel he gives the reason why he wrote that Gospel, viz., that Theophilus might "know the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed," in the preface to the Acts he gives no such reason, but commences somewhat abruptly with the narrative itself.

The explanation seems to be twofold, (1.) Theophilus, who may be taken as representing any educated believer of the apostolic age, had not been catechized or grounded in the things mentioned in the Acts, as he had been in those taught in the Gospel: for the necessary instruction of all Christians was the account of the Lord's Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection, but the account of the foundation and first building of the Christian Church, though of the greatest importance to all well-taught believers, was, as regards the general instruction of the great body of the faithful, very subordinate to that of the Life and Death of the Lord.

Thus Chrysostom begins his homilies on the Acts with such extraordinary words as: "To many persons this book is so little

b Mark xvi.  
19. Luke ix.  
51. & xxiv. 51.  
ver. 9. 1 Tim.  
iii. 16.

2 <sup>b</sup> Until the day in which he was taken up,

known, both it and its author, that they are not even aware that there is such a book in existence. For this reason especially I have taken this narrative for my subject, that I may draw to it such as do not know it, and let not such a treasure as this remain hidden out of sight."

(2.) But another reason of a deeper character may be given. St. Luke writes that his former treatise was "of all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach." The work of Jesus whilst on earth was but the beginning of His work. It was a work done under difficulties. "I have a Baptism," He says, "to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The work before the Ascension was but the beginning. The work after the Ascension was the continuance and the application. Whilst on earth He worked on a few and under the restraints of a human sphere. After the Ascension He worked on the world from a Divine Sphere. The Acts whilst they are the Acts of human instruments, are yet the Acts of Jesus glorified. He chooses the apostle who is to fill the place of the traitor. He baptizes with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost (ii. 33). His Name, through faith in His Name, makes the lame man strong. God, though He had raised up Jesus out of the sight of men, had none the less sent Him to bless them. The Lord personally appears to Saul, and converts him. Peter says to Dorcas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." So that the Book of the Acts is the account of the Risen Lord working through His Spirit by the hands of His servants; and yet with all this, the Acts may be called the Gospel of the Holy Ghost, for in it the Holy Spirit is in the forefront, personally present, baptizing, teaching, directing, restraining, forbidding—all but personally appearing.

"O Theophilus." It is to be noticed that St. Luke, in this second treatise, drops the term of respect, "most excellent" (*κράτιστε*), which he had used towards him in the Gospel. Some think that this was because he had become more familiar with him in the meantime; others (Catholics) that Theophilus had given up the exalted position which he had held, in order that he might have less worldly temptations, and more leisure for prayer and the service of God.

2. "Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he,

after that he through the Holy Ghost <sup>c</sup> had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen :

3 <sup>d</sup> To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God :

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xxviii.  
19. Mark  
xvi. 15. John  
xx. 21. ch.  
x. 41, 42.  
<sup>d</sup> Mark xvi.  
14. Luke xxiv.  
36. John xx.  
19, 26. & xxi.  
1, 14. 1 Cor.  
xv. 5.

3. "Being seen of them forty days." Rather "appearing unto them by the space of forty days." So Syriac. *Apparens eis*, Vulg.

through the Holy Ghost," &c. The structure of the sentence in the Greek admits of two meanings: either that the Lord had chosen the Apostles through the Holy Ghost, or that He gave commandments to them through the Holy Ghost. The Lord does all through the Spirit, just as He does nothing without, or apart from, the Father. Or it may have reference to His state of humiliation during which He laid aside His own power and glory, and worked His miracles through that Divine Person Who was subordinate to Him in the Unity of the Trinity.

3. "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion," &c. "Alive," *i. e.*, alive in His Body, alive from the dead. In the case of the Lord His Life is not the separate life of the soul or spirit; but the combined life of body, soul, and spirit.

"By many infallible proofs." Infallible proofs is expressed in the original by one word, which signifies proofs that carry conviction. It is defined by Aristotle as "the necessary convincing proof," *Rhet. i. 2, 16.* (Bishop Jacobson in Speaker's Commentary.) These proofs were feeling Him, handling Him, putting their fingers into His wounds, and seeing Him eat before them.

"Being seen of them." Being seen of them, not continuously, as before His Crucifixion, but at intervals, according as He willed to be seen or to be invisible. "The purposely chosen *ὀφρανόμενος*, *conspiciendum se præbens* (comp. Tobit xii. 19, 1 Kings viii. 8), corresponds to the changed corporeality of the Risen One." (Meyer).

"Forty days." This corrects the impression which we might possibly have derived from the latter verses of St. Luke's Gospel, that the Ascension followed very closely upon the Resurrection. From no other Evangelist do we learn that the interval was so prolonged, though from both St. Matthew and St. John we should gather that it was considerable.

4 \* And, || being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, <sup>f</sup> which, *saieth he*, ye have heard of me.

\* Luke xxiv. 43, 49.

|| Or, *eating together with them.*

f Luke xxiv. 49. John xiv. 16, 26, 27. & xv. 26. & xvi. 7. ch. ii. 33.

4. The marginal reading, "eating together with them," is in the Vulgate and Syriac; the Revisers put it in the margin.

"Speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." This, taken in connection with what precedes, implies that there must have been very many more appearances than those recorded, and, by consequence, many more words said than the words of the great forty days which have been preserved to us.

"The things pertaining to the kingdom of God." If the things which He spake were things pertaining to a kingdom, they must have been things pertaining to rule, to offices, to organization, to means of transmission, as well as to matters pertaining to internal or spiritual religion. Take, for instance, such a thing as the laying on of hands in Confirmation. Such a rite, the inward Grace of which is the gift of the Spirit, could not have been ordained by the Apostles without some express direction from the Lord. It is first mentioned very early in the narrative (viii. 17) in a way which implies that it was a stated rite of the Church from the beginning. So with the laying on of hands in Ordination (Acts vi. 6). It seems to have been practised from the first, and so was doubtless one of the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God," of which the Lord spake before He was taken up. To these we may add the change of the day of weekly religious observance from the Saturday to the Sunday.

4. "And, being assembled together with them" [or as in margin, "eating together with them"], "commanded them . . . not depart from Jerusalem." Jerusalem was, in our Lord's own words, "the city of the great king." The Lord was to send the "rod of the Messiah's power"—*i.e.*, the influence of the Holy Ghost,—"out of Zion," and from thence was to begin His rule, "even in the midst among His enemies." The city which had crucified Him was first to see the manifest signs of His Exaltation (ii. 33).

"The promise of the Father." This promise was especially

5 <sup>s</sup> For John truly baptized with water; <sup>h</sup> but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

<sup>s</sup> Matt. iii. 11.  
ch. xi. 16. &  
xix. 4.

6 When they therefore were come together,

<sup>h</sup> Joel iii. 18.  
ch. ii. 4. & xi.  
16.

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5. "With the Holy Ghost," or "in the Holy Ghost."

embodied in Joel ii. 28: "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh," &c., also Zech. xii. 10. The last great discourse of the Lord, John xiv., xv., xvi., is full of it, and to this, no doubt, the Lord alludes when He adds, "which ye have heard of me."

But the Holy Ghost was especially the promise of the Father because the new dispensation is emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit. Through Him the Person of Christ is revealed to us; through Him the work of Christ is applied to us. He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to us. The Catholic Church is His Creation. As the human body of the Lord was conceived by Him, so the Mystical Body of the Lord exists through His power. The various orders of the ministry are His gift (1 Cor. xii. 28-31). The Sacraments are His operations (1 Cor. xii. 13). All the graces of the Christian character are His fruits (Gal. v. 22). The very indwelling of the Father and the Son in the Christian is due to Him, for through Him is the promise of the Lord fulfilled: "If a man love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23).

5. "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," &c. The Baptism of the Baptist was outward and typical merely. It was not the Sacrament of the New Covenant. For they who had received it and had not been baptized into Christ had to be baptized afresh (Acts xix. 4, 5): but that plenary Baptism of the Spirit in which the whole Church in the Apostles was to be baptized on Whitsunday, was literally with the Holy Ghost. He manifested His presence to the eyes of men when He sat upon each Apostle in a cloven tongue, as of fire. He manifested His presence in the mind by the most astonishing of all mental gifts—the gift of speaking in new tongues. He manifested His presence in the heart by godly fear, by unselfishness, by unwearied devotion, by spiritual joy.

6. "When they therefore were come together they asked of him,

they asked of him, saying, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv.    <sup>2</sup> restore again the kingdom to Israel?

3.

<sup>2</sup> Isai. i. 26.

Dan. vii. 27.

Amos ix. 11.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv.

36. Mark xiii.

32. 1 Thes.

v. 1.

7 And he said unto them, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

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7. "Hath put in his own power," "Hath set within his own authority," Revisers.

saying, Lord wilt thou," &c. They have been too severely blamed for low and carnal views in that they asked this, but it is to be remembered that all the promises of the Messianic kingdom and glory were to Israel, and they could not, as yet, by any possibility, form the conception of a spiritual Israel which should, for a time, inherit all the promises during the period of the casting away of Israel after the flesh. The "Jerusalem which was from above," which was "free," which was to be the mother of all saints, was not yet made known; its universality, its all-embracing character was the mystery hid from ages and generations (Ephes. iii. 5), and was one of the highest revelations of Pentecost. How then could they, as yet, apprehend it? Taking the Messiah to be the King of Israel, the question simply meant, Wilt Thou now begin to reign?—Wilt Thou now take to Thee Thy great Power?

7. "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons," &c. The Lord turns off the question put to Him by His disciples. He does not deny that there will be a restoration of the literal Israel. He, in fact, by the form of His answer admits it. He intimates that in its due time and season it will take place; otherwise He would have said much more than that the times and seasons were not within the sphere of the knowledge vouchsafed to them. Are we not here forbidden to fix the *times* of events yet hidden in the future? During the last fifty years the time of the Lord's Second Coming has been settled by students of prophecy at least three times as about to take place at once, and so good men turn away from a study which seems to be fruitless and disappointing, whereas the mere contemplation of the future which God may only partially reveal, has a most wholesome effect in loosening our minds from earthly things, and impressing upon us more than anything else can that all things are ordered by God.

8 <sup>m</sup> But ye shall receive || power, <sup>n</sup> after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and <sup>o</sup> ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

<sup>m</sup> ch. ii. 1. 4.  
 || Or, *the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.*  
<sup>n</sup> Luke xxiv. 49.  
<sup>o</sup> Luke xxiv. 48. John xv 27. ver. 22. ch. ii. 32.  
 p Luke xxiv. 51.

9 <sup>p</sup> And when he had spoken these things, while

8. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," &c. Power to witness to the Resurrection in all languages, power to preach so that men shall be drawn to Me by your preaching, power to work miracles in attestation of the truth of your teaching. This power was the power of the Holy Ghost : wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, being all the work of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10).

"And ye shall be witnesses." One commentator remarks, "Witnesses—not princes." Certainly not princes after the fashion of the princes of this world ; but, if one of these witnesses of the Resurrection of the Lord had founded a Church, would any true Christian in that Church lightly disregard the godly admonitions of one who had been the chosen companion of God Incarnate ?

"In Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Notice the gradual extension. Jerusalem was the religious metropolis of Judaism. By prolonging their stay at Jerusalem they would be able to act upon the Jews who attended at the feasts, and upon the various synagogues of religious Hellenists of all nationalities. All Judæa *i.e.*, Galilee of the Gentiles and Peræa ; Samaria, the land of Gentile heretics who yet aimed at worshipping the God of Abraham ; and unto the uttermost part of the earth, called in the Old Testament the isles of the Gentiles.

9. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up," &c. "He was taken up." The Ascension of the Lord is necessary if we are to regard Him as God, and as the Head of His mystical body the Church Catholic.

Had He remained in this world, occupying a local throne in Jerusalem, we could hardly have recognized and worshipped Him



they beheld, <sup>a</sup> he was taken up; and a cloud received him  
<sup>a</sup> ver. 2. out of their sight.

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as God Omnipresent; He must have veiled His glory, or He would have consumed us, and how could we have regarded a local sovereign, however glorious or powerful, as "God over all"?

But when He ascended, He ascended into the place or sphere of Deity. Now we can realize Him as looking down upon us all, as regarding all, as having an equal interest in all. He no longer belongs to a city or to a race, but to all men. We can now apprehend as we could not have otherwise done all His Divine attributes, His omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence. And so He can be the Head of the Universal Church. We can now realize as the Apostle did His Catholicity—that in Him is "neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

But men affect to regard the Ascension as impossible, or at least unreal, because of the conditions of the solar system. If He ascends out of this world He is above to some, He is below to others, and how can He be stationary and we ever moving? To all this we have only to answer that as He is exalted into the sphere of Deity, He is now in a condition in which space has not its separating or dividing character as it has to us. He has ascended far above all heavens—not that He might be apart from, but that He might fill, all things. We cannot talk about His distance from us, for He has but to lift up a veil for a moment, and we should see Him as St. Stephen did just before his martyrdom, and Saul on his way to Damascus.

The Lord ascended up into heaven for these purposes:—

1. To receive again the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John xvii. 5).
2. To be our Intercessor and High Priest at the Right Hand of God (Rom. viii. 34).
3. To prepare a place for us (John xiv. 2, 3).
4. To rule all things on our behalf (Ephes. i. 20, 23).

"A cloud received him out of their sight." It was not meet and fitting, it was not consistent with reverence that they should pursue with their eyes a gradually lessening form. It would have connected the Lord's disappearance with such ideas as that of gradually increasing distance, in outward space; so the cloud hides Him, and the mystery of His departure is preserved.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them <sup>r</sup> in white apparel;

11 Which also said, <sup>s</sup> Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, <sup>t</sup> shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

12 <sup>u</sup> Then returned they unto Jerusalem from

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxviii.  
3. Mark xvi. 5.  
Luke xxiv. 4.  
John xx. 12.  
ch. x. 3, 30.

<sup>s</sup> ch. ii. 7. &  
xiii. 31.

<sup>t</sup> Dan. vii. 13.  
Matt. xxiv. 30.  
Mark xiii. 26.  
Luke xxi. 27.  
John xiv. 3.

1 Thess. i. 10.  
& iv. 16. 2  
Thess. i. 10,  
Rev. i. 7.

<sup>u</sup> Luke xxiv.  
52.

We have no mention of the cloud being the Shechinah, or bright cloud of the Transfiguration. The thought is to be fixed upon this, that as He disappeared in the clouds, so He will reappear again in them.

10, 11. "And while they looked stedfastly . . . as ye have seen him go into heaven." The moment the Lord disappears there is a clear intimation from Himself, by two of His angels, that He will reappear. One would almost gather from the angelic words that His reappearance was to take place very shortly. Now we learn from this that though the times and the seasons are only known to the Father, yet *for us* on earth there is to be no time, no fixed and determined period of time between the Lord's Ascension and the Second Advent.

During the whole period, no matter how prolonged, each successive age of the Church is to look for the Lord, and to watch and to wait for Him, and to believe firmly that He may come again at any moment, and to be ever in an expectant attitude—not, of course, idly gazing, much less presumptuously affirming that at such or such a time He will return; but to be ready to welcome Him, and lay our work before Him, to be loose to the world, as a world which will pass away and give way to a world in which God will make all things new, and in which the Lord will reign personally and visibly for ever.

12. "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is," &c. The place of the Ascension is here plainly indicated as being the Mount of Olives.

Some difficulty has been made respecting this because the village

the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

13 And when they were come in, they went up <sup>x</sup> into an upper room, where abode both <sup>y</sup> Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bar-  
x ch. ix. 37, 39. & xx. 8.  
 y Matt. x. 2, 3, 4.

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13. "James and John." So E., most Cursives, and some Syriac and Arm.; but N, A., B., C., D., 61, 96, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac (Schaff), Æth., read "John and James."

of Bethany, which is on the east slope of the Mount of Olives, is at least two Sabbath days' journey, or fifteen furlongs, from Jerusalem; but it is not likely that our Lord would ascend from the midst of a town or village. It is most probable that St. Luke in the Gospel, by the words "as far as to Bethany," means as far as the district or environs of Bethany; and that He ascended from one of the summits of the Mount, which would be about a Sabbath day's journey, or about a mile from the nearest part of Jerusalem.

From the mention of a Sabbath day's journey, Chrysostom gathered that the Lord ascended on a Sabbath; but this is improbable, as it is so expressly stated that the Lord was "seen of them forty days." The Church Festival of the Ascension, which occurs on the fortieth day after Easter, was certainly observed on that day from very early times. Thus, in the Apostolic Constitutions, which are clearly Ante-Nicene, it is laid down: "And again from the first Lord's Day count forty days, from the Lord's Day till the fifth day of the week, and celebrate the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, whereon He finished all His dispensation and constitution, and returned to that God and Father that sent Him, and sat down at the right hand of power," &c. (v. 19).

13. "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room," &c. "When they were come in"—that is, into the city.

"They went into an upper room"—*i. e.*, the upper room: in all probability the room in which the Eucharist had been instituted, and where the Lord had appeared to them. It was no doubt their house of assembly. That it was one of the chambers of the Temple is not to be supposed for a moment, as the High Priest would never have allowed them, as a body, the use of any room within the precincts over which he had control.

"Where abode." Not where they lodged, but where they

tholomew, and Matthew, James *the son of Alphæus*, and  
 \* Simon Zelotes, and \* Judas *the brother of James*. \* Luke vi. 15.  
 \* Jude i.

assembled as a company or body. Bishop Pearson writes: "Epi-  
 phanius relates that when the Emperor Adrian came to Jerusalem  
 he found the whole city utterly destroyed, and the Temple of God  
 laid waste, excepting a few small houses, and a Church of God,  
 diminutive in size, there located, as he asserts, on the return of the  
 disciples, after the Saviour's Ascension from Mount Olivet, and in  
 the district of Sion. We have it also on the authority of Nice-  
 phorus, that Helen, the mother of Constantine, there raised a mag-  
 nificent temple, the vestibule of which was on the very site of the  
 house where the Holy Ghost descended in its upper room."

"Both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew . . . Judas the  
 brother of James." This is the fourth distinct list of the names of  
 the Apostles. Of the after-life of nine of them we know nothing.  
 Because the Lord chose them at the first, and kept them in union  
 with Him till His Spirit descended upon them, we are sure that  
 they must have been men of the deepest Christian piety, patience,  
 and self-denial; but of the greater part of them ecclesiastical history  
 or tradition has not preserved to us a single reliable anecdote.  
 "O" we are tempted to exclaim, "O that we could have but  
 one short chapter respecting each, giving us the sphere of his  
 labours, the churches he founded, the nature and place of his  
 martyrdom, and one or two sayings of his own or of his Master's,  
 which he had remembered and cherished; but in no books written  
 by men are these to be found—only in God's books, and these are  
 not yet opened." How is it, then, that their names are so impressed  
 upon us, and not one of their acts or sufferings? I have thought  
 long on this, and I can give but one reason—the magnifying of  
 their office as the God-ordained links between the ministry of  
 Christ and that of His Church. They are the first spreading  
 branches springing out of Christ the Vine from which proceeds the  
 Catholic Church. They are the assurances that everywhere through-  
 out the world there shall exist the Apostolic ministry in the fulness  
 of its grace.

The names are the same as those in Luke vi. 14, but not, as there,  
 in pairs, or in the same order, for which circumstance no explana-  
 tion worth attention can be given.

"Judas the brother of James." The Syriac gives "the son of

14 <sup>b</sup>These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with <sup>c</sup>the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with <sup>d</sup>his brethren.

<sup>b</sup> ch. ii. 1, 46.

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

<sup>d</sup> Matt. xiii. 55.

14. "And supplication." Omitted by most authorities, N, A., B., C., D., F., h, 14\*, 61, 81, 142, 177, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syr., Arm., Æth.

James." If so, however, he need not have been the son of James the son of Alphæus, as James (Jacob) and Simon (Symeon) were the most common of Jewish names. He is in St. Matthew's list called Lebbæus, and in St. Mark's Thaddæus.

14. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women," &c. For what did they thus continue with one accord in prayer? Evidently for the descent of the Holy Spirit. But was He not promised absolutely? He was promised; but when God gives a promise, no matter how distinct, no matter how seemingly absolute, it still lies upon us that we should pray for its fulfilment earnestly and continuously till we receive it. Thus Daniel "knew by books" that the time was come for the restoration of Israel; but instead of waiting for that restoration with folded arms, he "set his face unto the Lord God to seek it by prayer and supplications, with fasting" (Dan. ix. 2, 3).

Notice the three conditions on which God's hearing us depends, Prayer, Unanimity, Perseverance.

"With the women." Almost all commentators notice the presence of the women as being one especial mark of the new state of things. In the Temple, God's house of prayer, which was soon to be destroyed, the women prayed apart: here, in the new and better house of prayer, they prayed as part of the Church, as on an equality with the other sex. In Christ there is neither male nor female, and at the earliest possible period is this asserted and acted on.

"And Mary the mother of Jesus." This is the last mention of the Blessed Virgin in the New Testament. It is impossible to suppose that if she had been designed by God to have that quasi-Divine position in heaven, as Intercessor and channel of grace, which the churches of the Roman obedience assign to her, there should be such absolute silence respecting her as there is in the subsequent history. Of her position or action in the Church, and of the place and time of her death, nothing is known.

15 ¶ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number ° of names ° Rev. iii. 4. together were about an hundred and twenty,)

16 Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, 'which the Holy Ghost by the <sup>f Ps. xli. 9.</sup> <sub>Johu xiii. 18.</sub>

15. "Disciples." So C.<sup>3</sup>, D., E., 1, 31, 61, most other Cursives, Syriac; but N, A., B., C.<sup>2</sup>, 8, 13, 163, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Æth., Arm., read "brethren."

16. "This scripture." So C.<sup>3</sup>, D., E., 1, most Cursives, Syriac; but N, A., B., C., h, 5, 14, 25, 61, 69, 81, 104, 163, Vulg., Sah., Cop., Arm., Æth., read "the scriptures."

"And with his brethren." For the relationship of the Lord's brethren to the Lord Himself, see the excursus at the end of my commentary on St. Mark. If anything is certain it is this, that they were not the children of Mary the mother of the Lord, but of another Mary, who was probably her sister or cousin.

15. "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said," &c. Peter and his brother Apostles could not have ventured upon the step they were now about to take, except the Lord had left to them special directions to do so. They had also from the time of the Ascension continued with one accord in prayer, and so if ever men had a right to the promise of Divine guidance, they had.

Peter stood up—not as the Prince or autocrat, but as the leader. A body of twelve, or of one hundred and twenty men, if they are to act in concert, must have a leader, and the Lord most certainly did not leave the choice of this leader to themselves, but appointed Simon Peter; no doubt because he possessed that most necessary quality, promptness in action.

"The number of names together were about an hundred and twenty." It has been inferred from this, and with good reason, that as one hundred and twenty was the largest number of disciples that could be got together in Jerusalem, the five hundred brethren (1 Cor. xv. 6) to whom the Lord showed Himself, must have been Galilæans, and the place some spot near the scene of His former labours by the side of the lake.

16. "Men (and) brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled." What scripture? Not any particular passage of scripture which foretold his course of crime terminating in his treachery; the Apostle alludes to or quotes no such passage, but one which

mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, \* which was  
ε Luke xxii.  
 47. John xviii.  
 3. guide to them that took Jesus.

h Matt. x. 4.  
 Luke vi. 16. 17 For <sup>h</sup> he was numbered with us, and had  
 obtained part of <sup>l</sup> this ministry.

i ver. xxv.  
 ch. xii. 25. &  
 xx. 24. & xxi.  
 19.  
 k Matt. xxvii.  
 5, 7, 8.  
 l Matt. xxvi.  
 15. 2 Pet.  
 ii. 15. 18 <sup>k</sup> Now this man purchased a field with <sup>l</sup> the  
 reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst  
 asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed  
 out.

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17. "Had obtained part." Revisers, "Received his portion in this ministry."

foretells the punishment of it—that his habitation should be desolate, and that another should take his office. They were now about to fulfil this prediction respecting his bishopric or office, by electing another into it, and the Apostle very aptly reminds them that *this* was foreseen and foreordained. So that it was needful for them to do their part if they were to fall in with the purposes of God.

17. "For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry." The word rendered "part" is literally "lot" (*κληρος*), and is the same word as is used for lot in the sense of giving or casting lots at the end of the chapter. From it comes the word *cleros*, or cleric, as one who has obtained part and lot in the ministry of the Lord.

18. "Now this man purchased a field . . . all his bowels gushed out." I commented on the discrepancy between the account given by St. Peter here and that in St. Matthew in my notes on that Gospel. It may be well to reproduce it.

(1.) The field is described in St. Peter's address as having been purchased by Judas himself before his death. By St. Matthew it is said to have been purchased by the priests; but the bargain for it may have been made by Judas, immediately on his receiving the money, or even before, when he had the prospect of acquiring it, and the payment not actually made; and so the chief priests completed the purchase of a piece of ground which served their purpose, by paying the money which Judas flung down.

(2.) Judas, according to St. Matthew, hung himself, according to the account in St. Luke, "falling down headlong he burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out;" but the latter account seems to require for its possibility something like the former. By any

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

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, <sup>m</sup> Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein : and <sup>n</sup> his || bishoprick let another take.

<sup>m</sup> Ps. lxxix. 25.  
<sup>n</sup> Ps. cix. 8.  
 || Or, office,  
 or, charge.

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19. "In their proper tongue." So A, B.<sup>2</sup>, C., E., almost all Cursives ; but N, B., D., omit "proper."

ordinary fall on the ground, he would not burst asunder, or as we express it, be ruptured ; but if he fell from some height, as he must have done if he hung himself, it is most probable that what St. Peter describes took place.

19. "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem ; insomuch as that field," &c. Both St. Matthew and St. Luke speak of the field being called "the field of blood ;" the one because the money paid for it was the price of blood—of innocent Blood—the other because of the deed of self-murder committed in it : but both circumstances may have contributed, for all Jerusalem knew that it had a double curse of blood upon it. Believers would say that it was the place purchased with the Lord's Blood, unbelievers that the crime of suicide, especially reprobated by the Jews, marked it as unholy and unclean, fit only to hold the carcasses of those whom they likened to dogs.

20. "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate," &c. The first of these is from the sixty-ninth Psalm, where, however, it is read in the plural number : "Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents." And the second from the one hundred and ninth Psalm : "Let his days be few and let another take his office ;" the word for office in the Septuagint being overseership (*ἐπισκοπήν*).

The first of these is undoubtedly a Messianic Psalm as it contains the words, "They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink." The place quoted by St. Peter seems to point to some curse on the house of the betrayer which has not come down to us. Or taking the word *ἐπαυλις* as signifying sheepfold in the same sense as in Numbers xxxii. 16, it may mean, Let his sheepfold or pastorate be desolate. But the application of the second quotation from Psalm cix. is very clear. As an Apostle he



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

o Mark i. 1.

22 ° Beginning from the baptism of John, unto

p ver. 9.

that same day that p he was taken up from us,

q John xv. 27.  
ver. 8. ch. iv.  
33.

must one be ordained q to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

r ch. xv. 22.

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

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23. "They appointed two." Better, perhaps, "they put forward two," as only one was to be appointed.

"Barsabas." N, A., B., E., 1, 40, 61, 80, 95, Vulg. (Amiat., Barsabba), read "Barsabbas;" most Cursives and Syriac as in Authorized.

would have been in an especial sense an overseer of many churches, in fact of all those which he had won to Christ from the dispersed Jews or from the heathen.

21. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord," &c. Wherefore, *i. e.*, because it was prophesied that another must take his office; but the office was to be primarily one of witness, witnessing to the holy life, miracles, and especially the Resurrection of the Lord, and so the choice was very limited—by the necessity of the case the selection was confined to those who had been the constant companions or followers of the Lord during His ministry, from the Baptism of John to the day of His Ascension.

23. "And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, . . . Matthias." Who appointed these two? At first we should have supposed that the whole body, the one hundred and twenty, in the midst of whom Peter stood up, elected them, but when we come to consider that these one hundred and twenty must (with the exception of the Apostles) have been mostly disciples who dwelt at Jerusalem, there seem grave doubts about this. The qualification was not eloquence, or talent for ruling, but constant companionship with the Apostolic body; and who were able to pronounce upon this fact except the Apostles themselves? So that all that we can say is, that the whole body of the disciples concurred in the selection.

"Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus." Lightfoot, quoted in Smith's Dictionary, gives several meanings of Barsabas.

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

\* 1 Sam. xvi.  
7. 1 Chron.  
xxviii. 9. &  
xxix. 17. Jer.  
xi. 20. & xvii.  
10. ch. xv. 8.  
Rev. ii. 23.  
† ver. 17.

25 'That he may take part of this ministry and

25. "That he may take part" (or lot). So N, E., most Cursive, and Syriac; but A., B., C.\*, D., Vulg., Sah., Copt., read "place;" "to take the place in this ministry and apostleship," Rev.

He suggests that Joseph Barsabas may be the same as Joses the son of Alphæus, and that Judas Barsabas of Acts xv. 22, may be his brother. Eusebius quotes Papias, a very early writer, as saying that "a wonderful event happened respecting Justus, surnamed Barsabas, who though he drank a deadly poison experienced nothing injurious, through the grace of the Lord."

"Matthias." Of this holy man's after life nothing certain has come down to us. "It is said that he preached the Gospel and suffered martyrdom in Æthiopia, but Cave believes that it was rather in Cappadocia." (Smith's Dictionary.)

24. "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts," &c. This prayer seems undoubtedly offered to the Lord Jesus; for He it was Who chose the Apostles, as we read in the second verse of this chapter; and it seems only fitting that He Himself should complete the number. Meyer denies this, and urges that the epithet *καρδιογνώστης* in Acts xv. 8, is given to the Father; but the Lord, all through His intercourse with them, had constantly manifested Himself as knowing the secrets of all hearts (see especially John i. 47, ii. 25, vi. 64, xxi. 17), and but a short time before this, one of them, in the hearing of all, had confessed Him to be Lord and God.

"Shew whether of these two thou hast chosen," &c. That is, by causing his name to be first cast out of the vessel containing the lots; so Proverbs xvi. 33, "The lot is cast into the lap: but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

25. "That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship." Take part, perhaps, "take the place" (*τόπος*).

"Of this ministry and apostleship." The word ministry here is *διακονία*, and signifies diaconate, or humble service, the other term signifies the highest grade possible, because that which the Lord Himself appointed to be held by His constant companions, to

apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell

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26. "And they gave forth their lots." ἀπέθραυσε αὐτῶν. So D.\* E., 1, 31, 40, most other Cursives; but N, A., B., C., D.2, 5, 7, 13, 25, 61, 81, 100, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Æth., read "to them," or, perhaps, "for them." αὐτοῖς instead of αὐτῶν.

whom He assigned the Twelve Thrones. This is very suggestive. All the ministers of Christ, whether Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, are simply and merely servants, *διάκονοι*, and in themselves nothing more.

"That he might go to his own place." Terrible words. For his own place is the one for which he had prepared himself by his fraud, his covetousness, his hypocrisy, and his treachery, whilst if he had but used well the grace vouchsafed to him, he might have prepared himself for a throne in heaven close to that of the Lord.

May God grant that the writer of these lines and every reader of them may make it his business through life to prepare himself for some place of eternal service at the Lord's feet!

I cannot help here giving the reader the note of pious Quesnel on this: "Before the election of ministers, or ecclesiastical superiors, frequent and solemn prayer must be offered to God, because it belongs to Him to choose them. The call of men ought to follow His call . . . If in order to choose the most worthy, it be necessary to know the hearts of men, it is then chiefly according to the disposition of the heart, that a man is either worthy or unworthy of the ecclesiastical ministry. God sees the heart clearly and openly, but men can know it only by the works. . . . Fear and tremble, ye patrons, electors, collators, &c., when ye consider under what uncertainty and apprehension the Apostles and all this Holy Church are, in proceeding to the choice of one single minister."

26. "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias," &c. According to the ancient mode of casting lots, the names of the candidates would be written upon tablets and put into a vessel, and the vessel shaken, and the first that leapt out would have written on it the name of him who was to be appointed to the office.

Or, it may be, as Bishop Wordsworth suggests, if the right reading is *αὐτοῖς*, they gave forth their lots to them, "that they placed in the urn two papers, on one of which the word Apostle was

upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

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written, and he who drew that lot was numbered with the Apostles."

It seems at first singular that this mode of filling up a sacred office should have been employed at this election to the vacant apostleship, and never afterwards in the history of the Church. According to Chrysostom, it was because "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; while this was so they committed the matter to lot, but never resorted to it after the day of Pentecost." How can we better close this account of the first act of the Church than with the words of the Church's prayer: "O Almighty God, who into the place of the traitor Judas, didst choose thy faithful servant, Matthias, to be of the number of the twelve Apostles: Grant that thy Church, being always preserved from false Apostles, may be guided by faithful and true Pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

## CHAP. II.

AND when \*the day of Pentecost was fully come, <sup>b</sup>they were all with one accord in one place.

\* Lev. xxiii.  
15. Dent. xvi.  
9. ch. xx. 16.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. i. 14.

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1. "With one accord." So C.<sup>3</sup>, E., most Cursives; but N, A., B., C., 18, 61, Vulg., &c., read "together," "they were all together" (ἅμα).

1. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord," &c. The Day of Pentecost, *i. e.*, the day of Fifty. This was the Jewish Festival known as the Feast of Weeks. The account of it is thus given in Levit. xxiii. 15, "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves

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

of two tenth deals : they shall be of fine flour ; they shall be baken with leaven : they are the first fruits unto the Lord."

Pentecost then was, as we may say, the harvest festival of the Jews. It was the feast of ingathering ; and so was peculiarly fitted to be the day of the beginning of the ingathering of all nations into the Church of God. The counting of the fifty days began from the end of the 16th Nisan, which happened in the year in which our Lord was crucified on a Saturday ; the fiftieth day from it would fall on a Sunday. The feast was also the celebration or commemoration of the giving of the law from Sinai, and so was peculiarly fitted to be the day of the promulgation of the New and Better Law, the Law of Faith.

"Was fully come," &c. That is, when it was the morning of the great day.

"They were all with one accord in one place." They were all : this seems to point to the one hundred and twenty as well as the Apostles.

"In one place." Certainly not one of the chambers of the Temple, as they would not have been allowed on account of their connection with Jesus to occupy one. St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, preaching in Jerusalem, speaks of the Holy Ghost, "Who on the day of Pentecost descended on the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues here in Jerusalem, in the upper Church of the Apostles."

2. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind," &c. The word answering to wind occurs only once elsewhere in the New Testament, in Acts xvii. 25, "He giveth to all life, and *breath*, and all things." This reminds us of such places as "He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;" "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job xxxiii. 4); "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Plumptre translates it, "a sound from heaven as of a mighty breath borne onwards." It is to be remembered that there was no violent storm, in all probability perfect stillness of the air, and yet an awful sound, as of a spirit passing ; the violence of the sound representing the energy, the irresistible force of the Spirit, as the hurricane carries all before it.

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

4 And <sup>d</sup> they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, <sup>e</sup> ch. i. 5.

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3. "Cloven tongues," see notes below.

"And it filled all the house where they were sitting." This is considered by many as typical of the filling of the whole Church or House of God with the Spirit, just as the house being "filled with the odour of the ointment," has been always held to be typical of the wide diffusion of the grace of Christ.

3. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." The most literal translation is, "And there appeared unto them divided tongues (or parted, or distributed tongues) as of fire." The Revised Version has "tongues parting asunder." It is a matter of uncertainty whether the word rendered "divided" means cloven, so that each was forked, or "distributed" among them. The Syriac has, "which were parted like fire," the flame of fire frequently appearing to divide itself.

Of course, just as the sound of wind was not occasioned by an actual wind, but came from heaven, so these tongues were not any natural fire, much less electricity, but a supernatural light, the outward and visible sign of the presence of the Spirit, just as was the dove upon the head of the Lord.

4. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues." Chrysostom supposes that these "all" are the hundred and twenty, and not only the twelve; but he interpreted it thus without apparently any dogmatical bias of any sort. It is surprising how commentators have been led by their preconceived opinions to take different views of this matter. An Ultra-Protestant commentator like Beza confines the gift to the Apostles apparently because the general tenor of the narrative seems to do so. Cornelius à Lapide, the Romanist, on the contrary, extends it to the whole hundred and twenty, in order to include the Blessed Virgin as a recipient of the gift of the Spirit. A considerable number of expositors of the present time interpret the "all" of the hundred and twenty, in order to do away, as far as they can, with the uniqueness of the position assigned by the Lord to the Apostles, and so by this sort of side wind to controvert the apostolical succession. The Apostles, it is assumed, need not be the foundation of

\* Mark xvi.  
17. ch. x. 46,  
& xix. 6. 1  
Cor. xii. 10,  
28, 30. & xiii.  
1. & xiv. 2, &c.

and began \*to speak with other tongues, as the

the Church, because others shared equally with them all Pentecostal gifts.

Now it appears to me that the position of the Apostles, as the sole source of ministerial power and authority in the Church, is in no way affected by the diffusion of this gift amongst the hundred and twenty, if so it was. For the Spirit at Pentecost was not given for the government of the Church, but for its diffusion, and for the sanctification of its members. Nothing can undo the force of the words by which the Lord, during His life on earth, confined the Apostolate to twelve persons,<sup>1</sup> but the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost was the beginning of the indwelling of the Spirit in the whole mystical body for purposes besides, and apart from, its rule or governance. Take as an example the Corinthian Church. From chapter xii. of the first epistle to that Church it is clear that the gifts of the Spirit were very widely diffused amongst the Corinthian Christians. They "came behind in no gift." "To every man the manifestation of the Spirit was given to profit withal: the word of wisdom, of knowledge, of faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues." Now did the possession of these gifts raise individuals or the whole Church collectively to the Apostolic level? By no means. On the contrary, there is no Church to which the Apostle Paul asserts his unique authority so sharply, so autocratically. "Am I not an apostle?" "Are not ye my work in the Lord?" "The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord," "God hath set some in the church, first apostles," "Are all apostles?" And in the second epistle, "If I come again I will not spare."

The question of the Apostolate, then, as the source of rule and government, is no way affected by the diffusion of the gifts of the Spirit: but, notwithstanding this, there are two considerations which seem to me to go very far indeed to prove that the gift was confined to the twelve.

First, the express mention of the Apostles alone as receiving the great commission in Matth. xxviii. 16, Mark xvi. 14, 15, then the

<sup>1</sup> "Ye shall sit on twelve thrones." "Have not I chosen you twelve?" "He sat down with the twelve." "He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles."

Spirit gave them utterance.

apparent limitation in the parallel words, "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem till ye be endued with power from on high." These words could hardly have reference to habitual dwellers in Jerusalem, as the hundred and twenty must have been. Now when we consider these intimations in the light of the fact that the multitude, when they heard the various languages spoken, exclaimed, "Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans?" it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that it was the Apostles who spake in divers languages. If others were joined with them no account is taken of the partnership of such persons in the gift.

"And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." There seems to be but one rational explanation of this gift, viz., that it was a power given to them for the spread of the Gospel. The Lord had said to them, "Go ye and teach all nations." "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." How were they, ignorant Galilæans, the most of them, we must suppose, in mature life, to learn the languages of the nations? We cannot suppose that such a commission, couched in such general terms, really meant nothing but "Go ye to those who speak Syriac, and to those who speak Greek;" but unless a miracle was promised it would have amounted to this. In all probability they only knew sufficient of Greek for purposes of trade or necessary intercourse upon matters which strangers would have in common. But for such a miracle they would have been utterly unable to speak an intelligible word respecting salvation, or grace, or resurrection, or eternal life, to any poor uneducated Arab or Egyptian, or Mesopotamian, or Persian, *i. e.*, to any man of the nations bordering on their own country.

Unless there had been some such miracle, sceptics might have, with good reason, drawn attention to the extraordinary anomaly that persons totally without linguistic training or leisure for it, were sent to all nations as if they knew all languages.

The reader will perhaps be surprised to know that there can be two opinions upon this; and he will be still more surprised to learn that this gift is pronounced by Christian critics never to have been used for the spread of the Gospel, *i. e.*, never for the one purpose for which it seems to be given and to be most fitted: but that it was



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

† Gr. *when this voice was made.*

|| Or, *troubled in mind.*

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

the "expression of rapturous devotion," or "an ecstatic expression of thanks and praise to God." It has been even likened to, and used as an illustration of, the unknown tongues of modern Irvingites.

I shall not interrupt the course of these notes to show the erroneousness of this view, but shall consider it fully in an excursus.

5. "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." "Dwelling at Jerusalem," most probably sojourning there for a season, as Jerusalem was the metropolis of their religion, the only place in which the characteristic worship of that religion could be celebrated, and the seat of its greatest teachers and their schools.

"Devout men." This is particularly to be noticed. The first recipients of the Gospel were not open sinners, enemies of God, "prodigals" as it were; but men of piety, who believed in the God of Abraham, and were looking for the Messiah.

"Out of every nation under heaven." There is a remarkable passage on the wide dispersion of the Jews in a speech of great power delivered by Herod Agrippa to the Jews to dissuade them from going to war with the Romans. Having spoken eloquently concerning the danger to the Jews of such a war, he says, "Nay, indeed, the danger concerns not those Jews who dwell here only, but those of them which dwell in other cities also: for there is no people upon the habitable earth which has not some portion of you among them." (Josephus "Wars of the Jews," II. xvi. 4.)

6. "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together," &c. Some suppose that this "noised abroad" means that this sound, *i. e.*, the sound of the rushing mighty wind, was heard all over Jerusalem; but the older translation seems to give the preferable meaning, for the rushing mighty sound of wind is not spoken of as if it continued any length of time.

"The multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man," &c. The first effect was what we should have ex-

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak 'Galilæans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own 'ch. i. 11. tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

7. "All amazed." "All" omitted by B., D., h, forty Cursives; retained by N, A., C., E., L., 1, 13, 40, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syr., Arm.

7. "One to another," omitted by N, A., B., C.\* 26, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Æth.; retained by D., E., I., most Cursives, Syr., Arm.

pected—amazement at the greatness of the miracle. This was intended by God, in order that their attention should first be arrested, and we can imagine no miracle of healing or casting out of evil spirits which would have so quickly and so effectually electrified the whole city.

7. "And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold," &c. As I have just remarked, if the hundred and twenty had spoken with tongues, this exclamation could not have been made, as they must have been disciples of Jerusalem rather than of Galilee: whereas the Apostles were Galilæans, and were so addressed by the angels, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing, &c.?"

8. "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" No doubt the Jews of the dispersion kept up some knowledge of their sacred language, but for all secular purposes they would have learnt from infancy and constantly used the dialect of the country in which they had settled.

9. "Parthians." Inhabiting the region to the south of the Caspian Sea.

"Medes and Elamites." The reader will remember how Shalmaneser planted colonies of Israelites in "the cities of the Medes." (2 Kings xvii. 6.)

"The dwellers in Mesopotamia." The ancient Assyria and Babylonia. An immense number of Jews, who did not return with their brethren to Jerusalem in the time of Cyrus, colonized these regions. They had famous Rabbinical schools: indeed, the principal Talmud is the Babylonian Talmud.

"And in Judæa." Alford writes: "I can see no difficulty in

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

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10. "Strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes;" rather, "sojourners from Rome, Jews and proselytes."

Judæa being here mentioned. The catalogue does not proceed by languages, but by territorial divisions: and Judæa lies immediately south of its path from Mesopotamia to Cappadocia."

"Cappadocia." The province immediately to the north of Cilicia, St. Paul's province. It embraced also Armenia.

"Pontus." To the north of Cappadocia, on the south-east coast of the Black Sea.

"Asia." The district of which Ephesus was the capital city, along part of the western coast of what we call Asia Minor.

10. "Phrygia." An internal province containing the cities of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium in its eastern part, and in its western Colosse and Laodicea.

"Pamphylia." A province on the Mediterranean bordering on Cilicia, containing Perga and Attalia on the coast.

"Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene." Here the Evangelist crosses over to Africa. There were synagogues of the Alexandrians in Jerusalem, and, according to Philo, two-fifths of the population of Alexandria consisted of Jews. There was a Synagogue of the Cyrenians in Jerusalem. Their country bordered on the Mediterranean to the west of Egypt.

"And strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes." This should be rendered, "And sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes." No doubt the Roman Church was first founded by these, and, probably, soon after Pentecost.

11. "Cretes and Arabians." We are told that there were large numbers of Jews dwelling in Crete, and as Arabia bordered on Judæa to the south and east, many Jews would sojourn there. It is well to remark that, though the Arabic language was a sister one to the Aramaic, a person speaking in Aramaic would be wholly unintelligible to an Arab.

"We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of

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

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

14 ¶ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

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God." What would these works of God be? Evidently the mighty works of Jesus of Nazareth culminating in His Resurrection from the dead.

12, 13. "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, . . . new wine." Now, neither the devout men nor the enemies of the Lord understood the significance of the miracle. The enemies of the Lord—the party of the chief priests—treated the Apostles as they had treated the Lord. They had said of Him, "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." They had said "He hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?" And now they say that His Apostles, under the influence of the Spirit, are drunk. They, of course, understood not the languages spoken, being Jews of Jerusalem. They heard sounds which to them were like jargon, and they at once took the worst view of what was going on. A single word with one of the "devout men" from Parthia, or Media, or Elam, would have been sufficient to manifest to them that an amazing act of God's almighty power over the minds of men had taken place.

"Of new wine." Properly, of sweet wine. It, of course, does not mean wine made that year, or only lately fermented. The word for new wine in Matthew ix. 17 is νέος, which properly signifies new. Blunt writes: "This wine was probably that produced from dried grapes by soaking them in old wine, and then pressing them a second time. This wine was highly intoxicating." Alford: "Wine perhaps made of a remarkably sweet, small grape, still found in Syria and Arabia."

14. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them," &c. "With the eleven." Another among the many evidences of the unique position which Christ had ascribed to the Apostles in the foundation of the Church. We shall soon come upon other proofs.

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, \* seeing it  
 \* 1 Thess. v. 7. is *but* the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel ;  
 17 <sup>h</sup> And it shall come to pass in the last days,  
 saith God, ' I will pour out of my Spirit upon all

<sup>h</sup> Isai. xlv.  
 3. Ezek xi.  
 19. & xxxvi.  
 27. Joel ii.  
 28. 29. Zech.  
 xii. 10. John  
 vii. 38.

<sup>†</sup> ch. x. 45.

“ Peter standing up.” Expositors draw attention, and very rightly, to the change which had come upon St. Peter. Before, he was scared from confessing Christ by the voice of a servant-maid. Now he stands up, the first of the Apostolic band, to assert the Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, and that the astonishing display of power over the minds and spirits of men was the sign that He was exalted to the right hand of God.

15. “ For these are not drunken . . . . third hour of the day.” The Apostle here appeals to common sense. Were religious Jews, as the Apostles and disciples were, likely to be drunken with wine early in the morning of such a day as Pentecost? “ Third hour,”—*i. e.*, nine o'clock in the morning. We are told that the Jews were accustomed to take nothing before the morning sacrifice in the Temple was offered at nine o'clock.

16. “ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Joel wrote to comfort the people of Israel because of a famine which had come upon them through swarms of locusts and other pests (ii. 25), but his prediction of good things to come passes on from that which was transitory and earthly to that which was spiritual and heavenly.

17. “ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit,” &c. The quotation is almost verbatim from the Septuagint, except in the first words, where St. Peter changes the “ afterwards ” (*μετὰ ταῦτα*) of the Septuagint into “ in the last days ”—doubtless under God's Inspiration, for that day was the beginning of the new and last dispensation. It might be prolonged, but still it was to be the last. There was to be no other dispensation till the end.

“ I will pour out of my Spirit.” Notice, the gifts and influences of the Spirit are not poured out, but the Spirit Himself. “ God the Holy Ghost vouchsafes to dwell in our flesh, to sanctify it and to

flesh: and your sons and <sup>x</sup> your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your <sup>x</sup> ch. xxi. 9. old men shall dream dreams:

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heal it. He Whom God saith He will pour out upon all flesh is the Spirit of God, and God. He does not say that He will pour out graces or gifts, ordinary or extraordinary, influences, communications, or the like. He says, 'I will pour out my Spirit.'" (Pusey on Joel ii. 28.)

"Upon all flesh." "'All flesh' is the name for all mankind. So, in the time of the Flood, it is said, 'All flesh had corrupted his way; the end of all flesh is come before me.' It does not include every individual of the race (though every soul that will ask for the sanctifying gift shall have it); but it includes the whole race, and individuals throughout it, in every nation, sex, condition, Jew or Greek, Gentile or Barbarian, *i. e.*, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, bond or free, male or female." (Pusey, as above.)

"And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Prophecy, in the Scriptures, has a wider meaning than it has with us now. Now it is almost, if not altogether, restricted to the prediction of future events; but in the Scriptures, it seems to signify a certain Divine afflatus or inspiration, under the influence of which men and women spake as from God things which no human learning could teach. Such hymns as the Magnificat and the Song of Zachariah or the Benedictus, were prophesyings. They who spake them were for the time raised into a spiritual atmosphere above that in which they ordinarily dwelt. The declarations of the true prophets were the messages of God. They ordinarily began with "Thus saith the Lord;" but inasmuch as they were so generally occupied with promises to those who obeyed God, and threatenings to those who disobeyed Him, they took the form of foretellings of what was yet in the future.

It is to be noticed that the promise is not limited to the male sex. "Your daughters" shall prophesy. We have the instance of the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist, in Acts xxi. 9; and St. Paul assumes that women may have this gift, though he enjoins them to "keep silence in the Church."

They may prophesy to the salvation and edification of the Church, and the warning or encouragement of many, without assuming

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will  
1 ch. xxi. 4, 9,  
10. 1 Cor. xii.  
10, 28. & xiv.  
1, &c. pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they  
 shall prophesy :

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that which ill befits modest women—the public ministry in the Church.

“Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” This is a Hebrew parallelism, and by no means confines the seeing of visions to the young, or revelations by dreams to the old. It rather signifies that both are the same gift. Instances are in abundance—Stephen, in Acts vii. 55; St. Peter, in x. 10; St. Paul in the Temple (xxii. 17).

18. “And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out,” &c. The Apostle here declares that the gift of the Spirit shall not be in any way confined to the educated and respectable of this world, but shall reach to servants and slaves. It is true that he alters somewhat the words of the prophet—the servants and the handmaids into *my* servants and *my* handmaidens. But the Christian servant who does his duty to his master as to Christ is peculiarly the Lord’s servant (Ephes. vi. 6; Col. iii. 24). The prophet Joel, whose words St. Peter quotes, unquestionably alludes to actual servants or slaves, and the Apostle is not likely to narrow the application.

We of the Church of England should look to this. If the Lord gives the word, great may be the company of the preachers; and He may not see fit to confine the great prophetic gift to those educated in universities or colleges. We shall in such cases have to fall in with His mind, and find spheres suited to them, for those who have undoubtedly gifts of the Spirit directly from Him; and we may rest assured that such gifts, if truly and indeed from Him, will not tend to the disintegration, but to the unity of the One Mystical Body.

Dr. Pusey (whose comment on Joel ii. 28-30 I earnestly commend to the reader) has the following remark on this verse: “The Church of Rome, whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world, was, as far as it consisted of converted Jews, made up of slaves, who had been set free by their masters. For such were most of the Roman Jews who occupied that large section of Rome beyond the Tiber.” Most of these, Philo says, “having been made

19 <sup>m</sup> And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour <sup>m</sup> Joel ii. 30, of smoke : 31.

20 <sup>n</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, <sup>n</sup> Matt. xxiv. and the moon into blood, before that great and <sup>29.</sup> Mark xiii. notable day of the Lord come : <sup>24.</sup> Luke xxi. 25.

21 And it shall come to pass, *that* <sup>o</sup> whosoever <sup>o</sup> Rom. x. 13. shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

20. "Great and notable day." So A., B., C., E., P., almost all Cursives, Vulg., &c.; but "notable" omitted by N and D.

freemen, were Roman citizens. For having been brought as captives to Italy, set free by their purchasers, without being compelled to change any of their country's rites, they had their synagogues, and assembled in them, especially on the Sabbath."

19, 20. "And I will shew wonders in heaven above . . . that great and notable day of the Lord come." The Apostle here, taking up the words of Joel, proceeds from the near to the far future—the future of welcome and mercy, to the future of vengeance and rejection—whether at the destruction of Jerusalem, or at the final consummation.

The darkness at noonday was a sign from heaven at the time of the Lord's Crucifixion. The sound of the rushing mighty wind was from heaven, the tongues which sat upon them were of no earthly fire. At the time of the end the Lord prophesies that "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light."

The blood has been explained as the Blood from the Lord's side, but this is hardly probable, as only one apparently observed it: the fire and the vapour of smoke, probably from the fire, seem to betoken some signs, the record of which has passed away, and some fearful portents which will immediately precede the Second Advent.

The day of Pentecost then, if we read the words of Joel and of the Apostle rightly, is the first, the beginning of the last days. These days are days of grace, and they will be prolonged; but they will be concluded by that great and notable day, to the near approach of which the orbs of heaven will bear witness.

21. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name," &c. The stress here is to be laid on the word "whoso-



22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth,

ever" (παῖς θεῖς). Whosoever shall invoke the Name or Almighty Power and goodness of God to deliver him from sin, and to enable him to live soberly and righteously and godly in the present world, and to have an assured hope of an incorruptible inheritance in the kingdom of God, shall be saved—he shall be delivered from the guilt and power of sin, he shall be enabled by God's grace to live holily, justly, and unblamably, he shall look for the coming of Him Who shall change his vile body that it may be made like unto His glorious Body.

But does this "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," imply that he shall be saved apart from the Church and in wilful neglect of the means of grace? We are obliged to ask this question because a commentator of the eminence of the late Dean Alford writes: "No barrier is placed, *no union with any external association or succession is required, the promise is to individuals.*"<sup>1</sup> This is a strange way of looking at this text, seeing that this chapter ends with the words, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." The New Testament writers invariably look upon the Church, and by the Church they always understand a visible body, as a means of union with Christ, not as a barrier between us and Him. If God has ordained a ministry of reconciliation and means of grace, then whosoever calls sincerely upon His Name and submits to His guiding, will be led to listen to the ministry of reconciliation and to realize the greatness of the means of grace.

22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God," &c. Here begins a second and more important stage of the discourse, and so the Apostle commences it with a second time calling attention to what he is about to tell them, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God," &c.

Mark the extraordinary wisdom, and yet simplicity of the words. Instead of at once bringing before them the highest doctrine of the faith, instead of at once asserting the Divinity and Incarnation of the Lord, he simply asserts the Divine Mission and innocence of Jesus of Nazareth.

"Jesus of Nazareth," *i. e.*, Jesus the Nazarene. His title on the Cross.

<sup>1</sup> The italics are Dean Alford's.

a man approved of God among you <sup>p</sup> by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know :

<sup>p</sup> John iii. 2.  
& xiv. 10, 11.  
ch. x. 39.  
Hebr. ii. 4.

“A man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs.” “Approved” in the sense of “accredited.” “Among you,” rather, “unto you,”—accredited unto you, shown to be that which He claimed to be. This, that Jesus was sent and accredited by God, was the first step ; and it involved all else. It involved His innocence, for God would not have accredited a wilful sinner. It involved the truth of all that He said of Himself, and of His relations to His Father, for God would not have accredited one who claimed to be what he was not. Now Christ had constantly represented Himself to be the Son of God in such an unique sense, that whilst all the old prophets were servants only, He was the Son. He had said of Himself that as God knew Him He knew God, that God had delivered all things into His hands, that He would lay down His life a ransom for many, that He would rise again from the dead and judge all men, and an immense number of similar sayings, for which He deserved death, if they were not true, but for which, if they were true, He must be honoured as one with God, and as God. So that if St. Peter's hearers would allow that He was thus approved or accredited of God, they must, if they were consistent, allow the truth of what He said of Himself and of God.

But how was He accredited or approved? By miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in their midst.

Notice how St. Peter does not assert that these works—these miracles, wonders, and signs—were done by the separate power of the Son of God, but by God Himself. This was what the Lord Himself had said: “The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (John xiv. 10). Again, how often did He say similar things? “The Son can do nothing of himself.” “I can of mine own self do nothing.” “No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.” “If I by the finger of God cast out devils,” &c. The line which the Apostle took was not to show that the Lord was endowed with independent power, but that His power was that of God, and its exercise required the approval of God. Upon the believing reception of this all the Catholic faith would follow.

1 Matt. xxvi.  
24. Luke xxiii.  
22. & xxiv. 44.  
oh. iii. 18. &  
iv. 28.

23 Him, <sup>a</sup>being delivered by the determinate

“Miracles, wonders, and signs.” Dean Plumptre notices that the words are three synonyms, expressing different aspects of the same facts, rather than a classification of phenomena. The leading thought in the first word (miracles, *δυνάμεις*) is the power displayed in the act; in the second (wonders, *τέρασι*), the marvel of it as a portent; in the third (signs, *σημείους*), its character as a token or note of something beyond itself.

“In the midst of you.” The miracles of the Lord were of the most public nature possible. They were performed in synagogues, in the open places of resort, in the Temple itself. This seems also to point to a ministry of miracles in Jerusalem. If the Lord’s miracles had been mostly confined to Galilee, St. Peter could not have said to dwellers in Jerusalem that the Lord performed them “in the midst of you.”

“As ye yourselves also know.” Some of them must have been witnesses of some of these wonders—all must have heard the fame of them. Any one among them could have conversed with eye-witnesses; probably with persons who had been restored to health and soundness of limb or eyesight by them.

23. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken.” Why does the Apostle insist that the shameful Death of the Lord was “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God”? Evidently for this reason. They might have naturally said that if Jesus had been a man “approved of God,” He would not have been suffered to die by so shameful a death. But, on the contrary, the Death itself was permitted, and more than permitted, for it was an integral part of the counsel of God in the redemption of the world.

If then the Crucifixion of the Lord was “by the determinate counsel of God,” was the wickedness of man which alone brought about that Crucifixion—I do not mean the general wickedness of the human race, but the particular wickedness of the Chief Priests and Scribes, and Judas, and Pilate, and the multitude who asked for Barabbas and demanded the Crucifixion of Jesus—was this wickedness by the determinate counsel of God? In other words, were the Jews and their rulers free agents, and so was their wickedness entirely their own, or was it decreed by God that they should com-

counsel and foreknowledge of God, 'ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. \* ch. v. 30.

23. "Ye have taken and." These words omitted by N, A., B., C., 25, 27, 29, 40, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac (Schaaf), Arm.; but retained by D., E., P., and most Cursive.

23. "By wicked hands." So E., P., most Cursive, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac; but "by the hand of the wicked" in N, A., B., C., D., and a few Cursive.

mit it? Certainly in all they did they were free agents. Certainly God abhorred their wickedness, which was all their own—none of it from God. How then can these two things be reconciled? We can see the way to their reconciliation in this, that any other exceedingly good and virtuous man who had made it his first duty to expose the hypocrisy and false religion and abounding wickedness of the rulers and people would have suffered these things at their hands, particularly if they knew that his success was dangerous to their gains and to their national independence. But there was this difference between Jesus and any other most good and wise and virtuous man—*i.e.*, mere man—that in the case of any other man the wickedness of his enemies would take its course naturally, and if we may be allowed to say so, it would require no special decree or interposition of God to bring such an one to the death of the cross or any other death. Whereas, in the case of the Lord Jesus, there must be a special permission from God that He should die, for He was the Life. He had Life in Himself, for He had said, "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (John v. 26.) The key to the mystery is in the words of the Lord, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John x. 18). It was decreed in the counsels of the Trinity that the Son should come amongst men to reclaim them, and by so doing expose Himself to their malice, and it was decreed that this their malice should not be hindered by His indwelling Life and Godhead from wreaking itself upon Him, but that it should have its way, and should issue in His Death upon the cross. So that God Who could not decree treachery, false witness, injustice, and cruelty, yet could decree that they should have their free course on His Son, and so bring about Redemption.

"Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." He speaks here to the people, for if it had not been for them, the

24 \* Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

\* ver. 32.  
ch. iii. 15. &  
iv. 10. & x. 40.  
& xiii. 30, 34.  
& xvii. 31.  
Rom. iv. 24.  
& viii. 11. 1  
Cor. vi. 14. &  
xv. 15. 2 Cor.  
iv. 14. Gal. i.  
1. Ephes. i.  
20. Col. ii. 12.  
1 Thess. i. 10.  
Hebr. xiii. 20.  
1 Pet. i. 21.  
† Ps. xvi. 8.

25 For David speaketh concerning him, 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved :

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24. "Pains of death," see below. Syriac, "loosed the bands of Sheol."

chief priests would have had no power—if it had not been for the people Pilate would have let the Lord go.

"By wicked hands." Properly, by lawless hands. The Jews were "under the law," and "made their boast of the law." The Gentiles were without law, and yet the Jews used the hands of Gentiles—those whom they accounted lawless and godless—to crucify the one law-abiding Man.

24. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." The pains of death signify rather the snares of death—the nets or cords in which death is supposed to hold his victims. Thus in Psalm cxvi. 3: "The snares of death overtook me." This is translated in the Septuagint by a word signifying "pangs," especially "labour pangs," and St. Peter adopts the Septuagint translation, which may yield a good sense if we hold Resurrection to be a reversal of death, which is of necessity held to be a painful thing. Some take it as if death itself were in the throes of labour and the pains were loosed by the Resurrection as a New Birth from the dead; but this, though ingenious, seems far-fetched and artificial.

"Because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." It was not possible, because God, in the word of Prophecy, had declared that His Holy One should not see corruption. It was not possible, because the Son had Life in Himself. How could the Life be permanently under the power of death? He might submit to it for a brief season for our sakes, but He must resume His own inherent Life when the purpose was fulfilled for which He had laid it down.

25. "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face," &c. St. Peter proceeds to quote a passage

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad ; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope :

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

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26 "Shall rest;" properly, "tabernacle in hope."

from the sixteenth Psalm, in which one who lived continually in the sense of God's presence had the promise of a victory over death and hell. The Apostle quotes the Septuagint almost word for word, but the sense of the Hebrew is the same.

"I foresaw the Lord always before my face." In the Hebrew it is, "I have set God always before me." Because the Psalmist made an effort to set God always before him, God so rewarded him that he was able to say, "I saw the Lord always before me."

"He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved." This was a further consequence of his always keeping his eye upon God ; but this blessedness would not end with life, but carried with it the assured hope of a glorious future beyond the grave. "Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue (*i. e.*, my glory, the best member that I have) was glad. Moreover, also, my flesh (when I lay me down in the grave) shall rest in hope (of rising again)."

27. "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," *i. e.*, in Sheol, in the place of departed spirits ; "neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." This was more than a promise of existence in a separate state. It was that the flesh should be raised incorruptible, and be reunited to the glorified spirit.

28. "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life." This may mean, "Thou hast made known to me the way by walking in which I may attain to eternal life." This was, of course, strictly true of David ; for it was by God's having imparted the knowledge of spiritual and moral life to him that he was enabled to be the man after God's own heart. It was also true in a sense of the Spiritual David, Who says of His Father, "He hath given me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting" (John xii. 50).

"Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." Nothing is more conspicuous in the Psalms than the joy which David

29 Men *and* brethren, || let me freely speak unto you " of  
 1 Or, *I may.* the patriarch David, that he is both dead and  
 2 1 Kings ii. buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.  
 10. ch. xiii.  
 36.

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had in God; and of the Greater than David it is said, that "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross" (Heb. xii. 2).

29. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that," &c. "Let me speak freely unto you;" rather, "It is allowable for me to speak freely, for though he was so great a man, he can now be spoken of as anyone can who has been long deceased." The "patriarch"—so called because he was the founder of a family, though he lived long after the time of those properly called Patriarchs.

"His sepulchre is with us unto this day." The historical notices of the Sepulchre of David are very interesting. He was buried in the city of David (1 Kings ii. 10). His sepulchre is mentioned as existing in the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the captivity. "After him [Shallum] repaired Nehemiah, the son of Azbuk, the ruler . . . unto the place [of the wall] over against the sepulchres of David" (Neh. iii. 16). If the knowledge of its locality survived the first captivity, it was not likely to be forgotten. As late as the time of Jerome it was known and resorted to as the tomb of the great king. Josephus ("Antiquities," v. 15, 3) relates that "he had great and immense wealth buried with him; and that Hyrcanus, the high priest, when he was besieged by Antiochus, that was called the Pious, the son of Demetrius, and was desirous of giving him money to get him to raise the siege, and draw off his army, and having no other method of compassing the money, opened one room of David's sepulchre, and took out three thousand talents, and gave part of that sum to Antiochus, and by this means caused the siege to be raised. . . . Nay, after him, and that many years, Herod the King opened another room, and took away a great deal of money; and yet neither of them came at the coffins of the kings themselves, for their bodies were buried under the earth so artfully that they did not appear to even those who entered into their monuments."

It is not absolutely impossible that it may partially exist unto this day. On the supposed site is built a mosque and an Armenian convent, the former containing the traditional tomb not shown to Christians and Jews.

30 Therefore being a prophet, \* and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

\* 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. Ps. cxxvii. 11. Luke i. 32, 69. Rom. i. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 8.

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, † that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

† Ps. xvi. 10. ch. xiii. 35.

32 \* This Jesus hath God raised up, † whereof we all are witnesses.

\* ver. 24. † ch. i. 8.

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30. The words "according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ," are omitted in the principal MSS., *i. e.* in N, A., B., C., Vulg., Syriac, &c.; they are retained in D., P., and most Cursives. The Revisers, following principal MSS., read, "that of the fruit of his loins he would set *one* upon his throne."

31. "His soul." So E., P., most Cursives, Arm., &c.; but N, A., B., C., D., 61, 76, 81, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac (Schaaf), Æth., read "he was not left in Hades."

30. "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him," &c. The promises to David respecting his offspring were so great that they could be fulfilled in no temporal king. Take for instance Psalm lxxxix.: "I will also make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." Again this is repeated in verses 36 and 37: "His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." Again, such a Psalm as the seventy-second looks to a superhuman Monarchy and eternal Reign. Now David in the sixteenth Psalm uttered words which were an exaggeration if they applied only to himself or Solomon or Hezekiah; but as he spake by inspiration, his words were not merely his utterance, but that of the Holy Spirit, Who, no matter what David meant by the words, spake of One in Whom they would be literally true. This One was the Christ, and of Him, and of Him only, could it be said that His soul was not left in the unseen place, neither did the smallest taint of corruption pass on His Holy Flesh. Such, and such an One only, could fulfil and leave perfectly accomplished in His Person the promises made to David. He was to reign eternally on a throne established in heaven as the sun. To bring about this He would not prolong a mere human life, a life of this world, but He must be raised up in a Frame eternal, glorious, incorruptible, to live for ever a heavenly Life.

32. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."



- 33 Therefore <sup>b</sup> being by the right hand of God exalted, and <sup>c</sup> having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he <sup>d</sup> hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.
- 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, <sup>e</sup> The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
- 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

The especial function of the Apostles, *i. e.*, in their preaching and teaching, was to witness to the Resurrection. This was the first truth—without it their preaching and the faith they might excite would be vain—with it all else would follow.

33. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father." This is the fulfilment of the Lord's words, "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you." The Holy Ghost was shed forth by the Son, Who had received Him in His fulness from the Father.

"He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." It is plain that the thing which they heard was the gift of various languages, but what did they see? No doubt the flame resting yet on the heads of the Apostles. Alford says, "the enthusiasm and gesture of the speakers," but surely enthusiasm and violent gesticulations are not, of necessity, signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

34-36. "For David is not yet ascended . . . both Lord and Christ." If any Psalm is strictly and purely Messianic it is the 110th. No sense can be made of it except we consider it as referring to the Christ. If there be no Christ, then the whole Psalm is unmeaning verbiage: for the Psalmist makes the Supreme God, the Jehovah of the Jews, say to another than Himself whom David calls His Lord, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Then He promises to this same Lord of David that the rod of His power shall proceed out of the Holy City, and that He shall be Ruler even in the midst among His enemies. Then that He shall bow the hearts of His people so that they shall willingly serve Him. Then that He shall supersede the authorized priesthood of God's people, and be a "priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec," the most mysterious personage in all Sacred History—one superior even

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God 'hath made that same Jesus, whom ye ' *ch. v. 31.* have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, <sup>5</sup> they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do ?

<sup>5</sup> Zech. xii. 10.  
Luke iii. 10.  
ch. ix. 6. &  
xvi. 30.

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to Abraham—for he blessed Abraham, and no doubt, as the Apostle says, “the less is blessed of the greater” (Heb. vii. 7).

All the Jewish interpreters with one voice referred this Psalm to the Messiah. In fact there was no one else to whom they could refer it. And now the miracles of Christ, the wisdom of His teaching, and His Resurrection pointed to *Him* as the Messiah, and here was the proof that He was at the right hand of God. The most Messianic of all Psalms was being proved to be true before their eyes. And therefore the Apostle concludes, “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

“Made that same Jesus.” The Son of God, fully partaking of the Divine Nature, was inherently Lord of all ; but inasmuch as He laid aside His glory and assumed an inferior and created nature, that nature had to be exalted by Another to the Lordship over all. “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted him.”

37. “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter,” &c. “They were pricked in their heart,” they were pierced with repentance and contrition of heart. For what ? Evidently for the way in which the Lord Jesus had been treated by their nation, their priests, and rulers, if not also by themselves. It is not at all improbable that some, perhaps many, among the multitude, had joined in the cry of “Crucify Him.” Or if not this, they felt acutely that a special messenger of God, One Who had done works such as no prophet or righteous man had done before, had been amongst them, and they had not known Him. “He had come to his own, and his own had received him not.” And now He, this rejected One, was at the right hand of power, and this might be His day of vengeance, and so they “said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what

38 Then Peter said unto them, <sup>h</sup> Repent, and be baptized  
<sup>h</sup> Luke xxiv. every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for  
 47. ch. iii. 19.

38. "In the name." So B., C., D.; but N., A., E., P., most Cursives, read *in*. "Upon the name for the redemption of sins," Revisers. "Unto the remission of your sins" after N., A., B., C., Vulg., Sah., Copt.; D., E., P., most Cursives, Syriac, omit "your."

shall we do?" Notice here how "the rest of the apostles" are associated with Peter, and separated from the hundred and twenty or any others.

Most expositors notice how in this was fulfilled the words of the Lord respecting the Holy Spirit: "When he is come he will convince the world—of sin because they believe not on me," and the words of the prophet, "They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him."

38. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." "Repent," so the Lord's forerunner preached, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." So the Lord Himself first preached (Mark i. 15). So St. Paul preached (Acts xxvi. 20). Repentance is the first thing, because without it no one doctrine of the Gospel can be realized. The whole work of Christ from first to last is salvation from sin, and they only can value this who have begun truly to repent of sin.

"Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Thus in the very first words introducing the new state of things is the place of Sacraments as generally necessary to salvation recognized. Now, seeing that repentance is a change of heart and will, a turning of the whole inner man Godwards, how is it that in the first words of the first Christian sermon, an outward rite of washing is associated with it? The answer is, that Christian Baptism is not an outward rite, but a sacrament, the outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace given along with it, and that grace is union with Christ, the first effect of which is remission of sins.

The Christian system is not a system of internal spiritual religion only as distinguished from the Jewish, but it is a system of union with Christ in one organization or mystical body—a "Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Coloss. ii. 19). Christian baptism differs from Jewish washings, or even from John's baptism, in this, that the latter were, at the

the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and 'to your <sup>1 Joel ii. 28.</sup>  
<sub>ch. iii. 25.</sub>

most, external edifying rites, whereas the former is much more. It is the means of our being grafted into Christ the true vine, and so corresponds with all the rest of the Christian system, which is the means of making Christ present as the second Adam, the new Head of humanity. But did the Apostle at once open all this out to them? We should say certainly not; for they were yet the veriest children, but they would in time be made acquainted with all truth, as they were able to bear it.

"In the name of Jesus Christ." But why not in the name of the Trinity, as Christ had commanded, "Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? This is a difficulty, but it may be very reasonably explained in two ways.

1st. Waterland, quoted in Wordsworth, explains it thus: "They administered Christ's, not John's baptism: that baptism which Christ had appointed." St. Peter expresses it briefly by baptizing in the name of Christ, not because it ran in His name only, but because it was instituted by His authority.

2nd. There is a peculiar fitness in baptism among the Jews being in the Name of Christ. For the Jews already believed in the first Person of the Trinity, the Father, and they believed also in a Spirit of God as proceeding from the Father; but the difficulty which they had to get over was to accept Jesus as the Christ of God, the perfect image and representative of the Father—the Meimera or Word of the Father; and so they were required at the first to be baptized in the Name of Him Who was the beloved Son of the Father, and the Sender of the Spirit.

"Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Both in baptism and consequent upon it. Baptism itself is the work of the Holy Spirit. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," and upon us as members of His Body descends the Holy Spirit. But St. Peter may here refer to gifts of the Holy Spirit similar to those they had seen in the Apostles themselves.

39. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off," &c. The promise of the Holy Spirit, is to you—to you as the chosen people, "to the Jew first."

children, and \* to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

\* ch. x. 45. &  
xi. 15, 18. &  
xiv. 27. & xv.  
3. 8. 14.  
Ephes. ii. 13,  
17.

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

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39. "Shall call." "Shall call unto him," Revisers.

40. "Save yourselves," or "be saved." "Untoward," "crooked." See below.

"And to your children." No doubt the hearers being Jews would understand this of children of all ages — the children of their households, for one of the first principles of their religion was that children, as such, could be admitted into covenant with God long before they could understand the terms of that covenant. It does not, as Alford remarks, mean their descendants, which would be understood by any Jew to be necessarily implied. Besides, there is a very distinct promise of the Holy Spirit to children in Isaiah xlv. 3, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses."

"And to all that are afar off." Looking at these words in the light of the Apostolical commission, "Go ye and teach all nations," we cannot doubt but that they refer to the bringing in of the Gentiles.

"Even as many as the Lord our God shall call." When God by His outward providence brings the preaching of the Gospel to any men, then they are the "called of God." The call of the preacher to repent and believe is the call of God, and men will have to answer for having heard it. As to the secret call, the reason why one accepts the invitation of God's messenger and another does not, with that we have nothing to do. We have to tell men that every invitation from God's ministers is an invitation from God, and woe to them if they do not accept it, and woe to them if they do not make it sure.

40. "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying." "With many other words." It is very probable that we must say this of all, or almost all, the sermons or discourses in this book. They are the mere outlines of what was really delivered by the Apostles.

"Save yourselves from this untoward generation." The word

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

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41. "Gladly" omitted by N, A., C., D., 19, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Æth., retained by E., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Arm.

"save" is in the passive and should be rendered "Be saved," but it amounts to the same thing, for how did they save themselves, or how were they saved? By hearing and personally accepting the message of salvation, by consciously and sincerely using the means of grace.

"Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Untoward should be rendered "crooked" or "perverse."

We should rather have expected that the preacher would have said, "Save yourselves from eternal wrath," but what he says is sufficient. The generation who through their abounding wickedness had crucified the Lord because of His goodness, was condemned. "Wrath," as St. Paul says, "was come upon them to the uttermost." The execution of it was only suspended till the elect remnant were gathered. And this wrath in the terrific woes which overtook their city and country was but the sign and assurance of a far more terrible one which should come upon them in the eternal world unless they repented, so that "save yourselves from this perverse generation" meant really, "flee from the wrath to come."

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day," &c. If "gladly" be a part of the sacred text it seems to indicate that these three thousand were not all who received the Gospel or were favourably impressed by the words of St. Peter, but only those who received it eagerly.

In the baptism of this very large number on one day was fulfilled the word of the Lord, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he." They were in all probability the fruits of the Lord's own teaching rather than of St. Peter's. Consider one of the last notices of the latest ministry of the Lord in Jerusalem, "And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him." But His words fell on ground utterly dry and parohed till the fertilizing flood of the Spirit descended.

1 ver. 46.  
 ch. i. 14.  
 Rom. xii. 12.  
 Ephes. vi. 18.  
 Col. iv. 2.  
 Hebr. x. 25.

42 'And they continued stedfastly in the

"Three thousand souls." It must have been difficult to baptize such a number in one day, and so Alford remarks: "Almost without doubt this first baptism must have been administered, as that of the first Gentile converts was (see chapter x., 47, and note), by affusion or sprinkling, not by immersion. The immersion of 3,000 persons, in a city so sparingly furnished with water as Jerusalem, is equally inconceivable with a procession beyond the walls to the Kedron or to Siloam for that purpose."

Another matter of importance is, this multitude must have been baptized simply on their confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and not after any course of instruction or probation. This is very important. The earliest Church baptized because it held baptism to be a means of grace *per se*. The grace did not depend upon the instruction, but upon the willingness to receive Christ, and the baptism was supposed to be an illumination which would enable them the better to apprehend the instruction. This did not continue. In after times there were periods of probation and instruction, and classes of catechumens, and baptisms at great festivals; but, at the first, baptism took place at the very beginning of the Christian career, so that it had the appearance of being more literally the birth or the entrance into a completely new state than it has since.

42. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship," &c. They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, or teaching. This may mean either that having been baptized without much previous instruction, they continued to sit at the Apostles' feet, and learn from them all that was necessary to build them up in their most holy faith, or it may mean that they continued steadfastly in the profession of the faith or doctrine of Jesus which they had learned from the Apostles, earnestly contending for its truth as the truth of God.

But what was the teaching of the Apostles? No doubt it was that body of tradition respecting the Incarnation, Life, Miracles, Teaching, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Lord, which is to be found in the Evangelists. This is the groundwork of all Christian teaching (Luke i. 4). This is the true doctrine of grace which is to permeate the soul if it is to live by faith.

apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

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42. "Doctrine," or perhaps teaching.

"And fellowship;" rather, in the fellowship. No doubt this must mean the fellowship of the Church. They continued in the One Vine of which the Apostles were the branches which first branched out from the parent stem, even from Christ—the One Body of which the Apostles were the principal nerves or bands which conveyed life from the Head to the members. I do not think that it can mean the sharing of one another's goods, for this is specifically mentioned afterwards in verses 44 and 45, neither can it well be the communion in the partaking of the Eucharist,<sup>1</sup> though that is essential to the fellowship, for the Apostle says, "we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17); and I do not think it can be the mutual love and sympathy which they had one to another, for that is rather a fruit of the fellowship, and comes by realizing it. The various members must first be united in One Body, and then the words of the Apostle become possible: "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinth. xii. 26). The gathering together in one fellowship must precede its realization in acts of goodwill and mutual forbearance. It is just possible, however, that the word may be connected with the next as in the Vulgate, "the communion in the breaking of bread," "et communicacione fractionis panis."

"And in breaking of bread." "The breaking of bread." This must mean the Eucharist—"the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16). It cannot possibly mean the agape or love feast, for that fell out of use at an early period, and the Holy Spirit would not have given amongst the marks of the Church one which was so soon to pass away. It can only mean the Eucharist, and why should it not? The Lord had ordained the Eucharist as the Commemoration or setting forth of His Death, and the means whereby men are to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood for the highest ends possible—that He should

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<sup>1</sup> The Syriac and Vulgate, however, both render it thus. Vulgate, "et communicacione fractionis panis, et orationibus." Syriac, "They were faithful in the doctrine of the Apostles, and participated in prayer and in the breaking of the Eucharist"



43 And fear came upon every soul: and <sup>m</sup> many wonders

and signs were done by the apostles.

<sup>m</sup> Mark xvi.  
17. ch. iv.  
33. & v. 12.

43. "By the Apostles." N, A., C., E., a number of Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Copt., add "in Jerusalem;" but this is omitted by B., D., most Cursives, Sah., Arm., Æth.

dwell in them and they in Him; and if the earliest Church was composed of real Christians they would desire to be obedient to Him, and to live in union with Him, and so they would naturally continue steadfast in the reception of that which He had ordained for such holy and heavenly purposes.

"And in prayers." More correctly, "in *the* prayers." The prayers seem to imply stated prayers. What were these? We can only be certain of one of the elements of which they would be largely composed, and that is the Book of Psalms. The Book of Psalms has from the earliest ages formed the most considerable part of the public services of the Church (apart from the Eucharist); and if it was so amongst Gentile Churches, much more would it be so in this earliest Church of converted Jews. If they were zealous for the law, they would be zealous for the use of the Old Testament, and more especially for that book which had always formed a chief part of the synagogue devotions, but as they read it, they would of course give an Evangelical meaning to it, as we do.

43. "And fear came upon every soul." An holy and reverential but filial fear pervaded the whole body of the believers from the manifested nearness of God in the miraculous signs, and in the power of Divine grace changing and illuminating the hearts of all. There was nothing approaching to the irreverence and indecent familiarity in worship which characterize so many modern revivals. "In his fear they worshipped towards God's Holy Temple." "They served the Lord in fear and rejoiced unto Him with reverence."

"And many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." Notice how here the wonders and signs were done not by the one hundred and twenty or the body of believers, but by the Apostles. Why is this specially noted? Because it was in the counsels of God to make the Church spring, not from a multitude, but from a few—as it were from a grain of mustard-seed.

This fact of the miracles here alluded to being done by the

44 And all that believed were together, and <sup>a</sup> had all things common ;

<sup>a</sup> ch. iv. 32,  
34.

Apostles seems also to go some way in deciding that the Apostles alone received the gift of tongues.

44, 45. "And all that believed were together . . . as every man had need." Were together, not of course in one place, for they were above 3,000, but were together in mind and heart—acted together, and had no divisions or separate interests.

"And had all things common: and sold their possessions and goods . . . every man had need." It is to be carefully remembered that this took place, not by any precept laid upon the Church by apostolical authority, but by the free liberality of each person. It is clear that there was no law of the Pentecostal Church obliging them to sell all they had and put it into a common stock, because Peter said to Ananias respecting the property which he had sold, "While it remained, was it not thine own; and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (v. 4.) It was entirely through the work of the Spirit, which led them to obey the words of the Lord, "Sell that ye have and give alms, provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."

But now the question arises, How was it that in the Church of Jerusalem only there existed this seeming community of goods?

Several reasons may be given: 1. That the mother of all Churches should, in the life of its members, exhibit a Divine benevolence and freedom from selfishness which was in its spirit to be an example for all Churches. If we are to believe an immense number of assertions and intimations of the Lord and His Apostles, the sin of covetousness is of all others the sin most contrary to the character of Christ, and most destructive of the spiritual life of the soul. It was well, then, that the first of all Churches should, in its opposition to this evil thing, go beyond all others—go beyond even what some may deem necessary; for our enthusiasm on behalf of what is good is influenced not by ordinary and commonplace, but by striking examples. We have the description of the character and conduct of the Pentecostal Church set before us at the very outset of Christianity, that we should constantly look to the rock whence we are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we are digged—to the fruits of the Spirit when He came down, not as a shower, but in a flood upon the dry ground.

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and ° parted them

• Isai. lviii. 7.

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If God would give us of the Church of England but a tithe of the grace with which He endowed the first of Churches, there would not be the frightful scandals in the juxtaposition of enormous wealth and its consequent luxury, and pinching poverty with its attendant miseries, which we have in London and our large manufacturing towns. I myself visited in London, as curate, a street of squalid houses four stories high, in each of which houses there were eight and sometimes ten families [this was above thirty years ago], and these houses were back to back to the mansions in a square, the rent of each of which would be between one thousand and two thousand pounds each, and each palatial residence fitted up in accordance with its cost and its dimensions.

But another reason has been given. If those in youth survived for thirty years, there would be no property left in Judæa or Jerusalem for them to have. The coming vengeance would reduce all to one level, and those would be best prepared to bear patiently this terrible catastrophe who had least of this world's comforts, and who had been inured by a life of poverty and self-denial to face the hardships of the sudden flight beyond the Jordan, and the life-long exile in such places as Pella.

I cannot help noticing an astonishing inference which has been drawn from this conduct of the Pentecostal Church to its disparagement. A Christian commentator writes:—"It is no baseless theory which sees as the result of this community of goods, existing so generally in the Jerusalem Church, the extreme distress which, as early as the year A.D. 43, prevailed among the Jerusalem Christians." Again, "A deadly torpor such as seems to have crept over and paralyzed the Jerusalem Churches, would by degrees have destroyed the energy of every Church whose members, by voluntarily renouncing rank, and home, and wealth, sought literally to fulfil their Lord's commands." ("Commentary on the Acts," by Howson and Spence in "Popular Commentary.")

Now this seems to me a direct censure on the Holy Spirit, for if ever there was a Church which both lived and walked in the Spirit, it was this Pentecostal Church. And, besides, this very abnegation of worldly possessions is ascribed in Acts iv. to the grace of God: "With great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all, neither was

to all *men*, as every man had need.

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45. "Every man;" rather, "any man," ἄν τις χρῆσθαι εἴχεται, "prout cuique opus erat." Vulg.

there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of houses and lands sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet" (iv. 33, 34, 35).

The facts of the case seem to be these. The Church of Jerusalem was from the first a very poor Church in respect of worldly goods, for the preaching of the Lord and of His Apostles was, as a rule, rejected by those who had property. This we cannot but gather from the parable which sets forth the excuses of those who refused the Gospel invitation: "I have bought a piece of land—I have bought five yoke of oxen—I pray thee have me excused." Very many such words were uttered by the Lord, and betoken that there was not in the Jerusalem or Palestine Church that (if one may use the words) due proportion of persons having property which was to be naturally expected. This is also manifest from the Epistle of St. James. In his fifth chapter he seems to put the wealthier classes of his countrymen as out of the pale of Christianity, *i. e.*, as unconverted, and the persecutors of the poor Christians; and his allusion to the rich man with the gold ring, and in goodly apparel, seems to assume that such was a rare occurrence in their assemblies.

The extreme distress alluded to by St. Paul in Rom. xv. 26 and other places, seems to have been the effect of the famine prophesied of by Agabus, and was in all probability intensified in the case of the Jerusalem Christians by their being deprived of all relief from the wealthier Jews. But it seems absurd to speak of the Jerusalem Christians requiring relief in a famine as a warning against undue generosity, when we find from Josephus that the whole of Jerusalem was, owing to a famine which occurred some time between the death of Christ and the destruction of the city, in great distress, and relieved by the assistance of a foreigner, Helena, the mother of Izates, king of Adiabene. His words are, "Her coming was of great advantage to the people of Jerusalem; for whereas a famine did oppress them at that time, and many people died of want of what was necessary to procure food withal, Queen Helena sent some of her servants to Alexandria with money to buy a large quantity of corn, and others of them to Cyprus, to bring a

46 <sup>p</sup> And they, continuing daily with one accord <sup>q</sup> in the temple, and <sup>r</sup> breaking bread || from house to

<sup>p</sup> ch. i. 14.

<sup>q</sup> Luke xxiv.

58. ch. v. 42.

<sup>r</sup> ch. xx. 7.

|| Or, *at home.*

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46. "Breaking bread from house to house;" "breaking bread at home," Revisers. "Circa domus," Vulgate. "In the house they break the bread," Syriac.

cargo of dried figs. And as soon as they were come back, and had brought those provisions, which was done very quickly, she distributed food to those that were in want of it, and left a most excellent memorial behind her of this benefaction which she bestowed on our whole nation." (Ant. xx. ii. 5.) The condition of the Christian Church, then, in Jerusalem seems to have been in no respect worse than that of the poor Jews in the same city.

The anxiety of the Apostle Paul respecting their relief was probably increased by his earnest desire that the Gentiles should contribute as liberally as possible, in order to win the hearts of the Jewish Christians, who looked with some displeasure at the Gentiles being at once, and without subjection to the law of Moses, made partakers of all the grace and privileges of the Gospel; and so he says, "By the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men" (2 Cor. ix. 13).

46. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple," &c. The reader will remember the last words of St. Luke's Gospel, "They were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." God did not permit anything like a disruption from the Church of the Old Covenant, but by His own guidance the new state of things continued a part of the old, till the destruction of the Temple, the only lawful home of Jewish worship. The Temple, which the Lord had called the house of prayer for all nations, was their house of prayer. They joined in the psalmody which accompanied its sacrificial worship. In its offerings and oblations they saw the all-atoning Blood shed and sprinkled. Everything in it reminded them of Christ the Lord, and there were plenty of places where they could stand in private supplication and thanksgiving.

"And breaking bread from house to house." There can be no doubt that this means celebrating the Eucharist in their private dwellings. As yet they could erect no building which would hold the multitudes which would assemble for the breaking of bread, in

house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

47 Praising God, and "having favour with all" \* Luke ii. 52.  
ch. iv. 33.  
Rom. xiv. 18.

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which they "continued steadfastly": so they must assemble in the largest "upper rooms" which were at their disposal, for the characteristic rite of their new faith could not possibly be celebrated in the Temple.

"[They] did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Does this food or meat mean the most holy Food of the Eucharist, or the far less hallowed, but still holy bread of the Agapæ, or their ordinary food? I incline to think the latter, for the partaking of food together was, in old times, a more religious act than we esteem it. Bishop Wordsworth translates it, "They were partaking of food with one another."

"With gladness." With exultation at the thought of the blessings of redemption brought so near to them.

"Singleness of heart." The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, and seems to mean simplicity and sincerity. Quesnel says well, "It is neither the abundance nor the delicacy of provisions, but the sweetness of charity which constitutes the joy and gladness of a Christian entertainment. Singleness of heart knows how to restrain itself in the greatest abundance, and to be content in the greatest poverty."

47. "Praising God." Some, as Cornelius à Lapide, seem to take this as praising God for their daily food, that meat which they eat with gladness and singleness of heart; but does it not rather mean, being in the spirit of praise, and showing this outwardly by offering God praise for all things?

"And having favour with all the people." Even those who did not join them, who as yet declined to profess the faith of Jesus of Nazareth, yet glorified God for the good works and heavenly dispositions which they beheld in them.

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The word Church is doubtful, the authority of MSS. and versions being against it, as the reader will see by the critical note. The Revisers render "The Lord added to them [or "added together"] daily those that were being saved."

Whichever way, however, we take it, the sense is the same. It

<sup>t</sup> ch. v. 14. & xi. 24. the people. And <sup>t</sup> the Lord added to the church

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47. "Added to the church." There is considerable confusion about this reading, as the note in Tischendorf, eighth edition, shows. "To the church," omitted by N, A., B., C., G., 81, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Arm., Æth.; but retained by E., P., most Cursives, Syriac. The words together, *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ* of the first verse of the next chapter, are transferred by most critics to the end of this verse, and so the Revisers read, "And the Lord added to them (together, *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*) day by day those that were being saved."

the Lord added "to them" such as were being saved, He added them to the Church, for the company or society to which those who were being saved were added was the Church, an organized body under the Apostles, and nothing else.

This place is of the utmost importance, as it shows that it was not the will of God to save men as units, or as unattached Christians, but as united in a body or fellowship. The saving them as mere units would isolate them, make them self-opinionated and selfish; make them feel independent of one another, and so encourage self-assertion, whereas the adding them to a body and keeping them in union with that body for purposes of salvation, would, if realized, make them mutually forbearing, forgiving, and sympathizing with one another; it would make them "kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." The Apostolic fellowship in which all power and grace proceeded from Christ through the Apostles to the Church, was unifying and would bind them together in one; whereas if rule or grace proceeded from the people, as some would have us believe, it would be disintegrating. The Church from the very first would have had no cohesion. The very faith itself would have rapidly been destroyed, for it could not have continued the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but would have tended to become more and more the expression of each man's private views and feelings.

In these last verses of this chapter we have the Church as it came fresh from the hand of God. We have its external marks of unity and its internal marks of grace. Its external marks of unity—baptism, instruction in the faith of Christ held by the companions of the God-Man, fellowship in the family of God, as being through the Apostles one with Christ, the constant reception of that Bread of Life which made them "One bread and one body," and constant attendance in united prayer. And marks of internal grace—godly fear permeating all, selfishness uprooted, and unbounded benevolence

daily such as should be saved.

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47. "Such as should be saved." An ungrammatical and mischievous translation. The tense of the verb rendered "should be saved" is the present (*σωζομένων*), and means such as were "being saved," such as were in a state of salvation; not a final, but a present one, in which they had to continue by faith and the use of the means of grace.

taking its place, living together in holy joy and simplicity of life, constantly praising God, and by their good works and devotion commending themselves to all around them.

Such was the mother of all Churches.

May God in His own good time restore it! And may God make us all partakers of its unity, its devotion, its godly fear, its gladness and its simplicity, for we are in union with it in its faith, its sacraments, its apostolic ministry, and its prayers!

### CHAP. III.

**N**OW Peter and John went up together <sup>a</sup> into the temple at the hour of prayer, <sup>b</sup> being the ninth hour. <sup>a</sup> ch. ii. 46.  
<sup>b</sup> Ps. lv. 17.

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1. "Went up," were going up.

1. "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour." Peter and John are here described as in close companionship, as they are all through the latter part of St. John's Gospel (John xiii. 23, 24; xviii. 15-18; xx. 2-7; xxi. 20).

"At the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour." This hour was three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of the evening sacrifice. It was the third of the hours alluded to by David, "Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice" (Psalm lv. 17). It was doubtless one of the times of prayer which Daniel observed when it is written that "he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (vi. 10). This praying stately at the three



- 2 And <sup>c</sup> a certain man lame from his mother's womb was  
<sup>c</sup> ch. xiv. 8. carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the  
<sup>d</sup> John ix. 8. temple which is called Beautiful, <sup>d</sup> to ask alms of  
 them that entered into the temple;

hours is alluded to by Clement of Alexandria in his "Miscellanies," VII., chap. vii.: "But the distribution of the hours into a three-fold division, honoured with as many prayers, those are acquainted with, who know the blessed Triad of the Holy Abodes." The seven hours in use in the Church afterwards were canonical in the sense of being for those who were under rule (canon), as the clergy and monks.

All true Christians ought to have at least three times for stated prayer each day—morning, noon, and evening—quite independent of prayers in Church, and family prayers.

2. "And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried," &c. It may be well to inquire why, amongst so many miracles wrought by the Apostles at this early date, the memory of this alone has been preserved. Evidently because it was the occasion of the first sermon preached by St. Peter after that on Pentecost, and because it led directly to the first act of persecution of the Apostles by the authorities, as given in the next chapter. It would have been well if chapters iii. and iv. had not been divided, but had formed one chapter, and then the connection of events would have been generally more clearly understood.

"Whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful." This gate was on the east side and was an outer gate, leading into Solomon's porch, and from thence to the court of the women. This gate was probably the Shushan gate—so called, it is supposed, from Shushan, the royal residence of the kings of Persia, who favoured the Jews, and restored them to their own land at the termination of the captivity.

"To ask alms of them that entered into the temple." These miserable objects are constantly seen now at the entrance of foreign churches; and, indeed, where there is no settled legal provision for the poor, it seems not unreasonable that those who from deformity or any other cause are unable to work, should be allowed to attract the notice of the charitable.

3. "Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple

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

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such

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3. "Asked an alms," "asked to receive an alms." So *N*, *A*., *B*., *C*., *E*., *G*., 13, 61, some other Cursives, *Copt.*, *Syriac*, *Arm*.

asked an alms." This is important, inasmuch as it shows that the crippled man did not know the Apostles as workers of miracles of healing. He expected to receive nothing from them except the ordinary dole.

4. "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us." He looked earnestly into his spirit in order to discern, not whether he had faith in himself and in his fellow Apostle as being able to heal him, but to see whether he had such piety and such a spirit of thankfulness that the benefit would not be thrown away upon him. It is to be remembered that such a stupendous exercise of Divine power as he was about to receive would leave him either much better or much worse. Much better, if he employed his restored powers in the service of Jesus; much worse if he relapsed into indifference, and practically forgot the Divine act of grace which he had received.

5, 6. "And he gave heed unto them . . . Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none," &c. "Silver and gold have I none." The Apostles shared in the universal poverty of the Primitive Church. Large gifts—the prices of houses and lands—were laid at their feet, but though heads of the Church, they held them to belong to the whole Church, and they claimed no more share in them than the most obscure believer. It may not be out of place to give the remarkable anecdote related of St. Thomas Aquinas; how he called on Pope Innocent IV. when he had a very large sum of money on the table before him; and, on the Pope saying, "You see, Thomas, that the Church cannot now say as the Primitive Church could, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "Yes, Holy Father," he replied, "but neither can she say, as did St. Peter to a crippled man, 'Arise, and walk.'"

as I have give I thee: \*In the name of Jesus Christ of  
 \* ch. iv. 10. Nazareth rise up and walk.

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

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6. "Rise up and walk." So A., C., E., G., P., almost all Cursives, Vulg., Copt., Syriac, Arm., Æth.; but K, B., D., Sab., omit "rise up and," and read simply "walk," "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth walk."

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." The Lord healed men in no name—not even in the name of God. In no one instance does He say, "In the name of God," or "In the name of the Father" "be clean," or "be healed." But in the narrative of the first miracle after the Ascension, of which the record has come down to us, the healing is effected in the Name of Christ; as He Himself had said, "In my name . . . shall they cast out devils; . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth." "Of Nazareth." The Apostle uses the name which was applied to the Lord by way of contempt. Over His cross His accusation was written, "Jesus of Nazareth." The name of His lowest humiliation was, when invoked in faith, the name of Omnipotence.

7. "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up." In this St. Peter followed the example of the Lord, Who, when He healed, most frequently both said the word, and accompanied it by an act by which He came into contact with him that was healed. In the case of the Lord, it was the healing virtue which proceeded direct from His Divine Person; in the case of the Apostle it came from the same Divine Person through the Apostle as its channel to the sufferer.

"And immediately his feet and ancle-bones received strength." The terms used for feet (*βάσεις*) and ancle-bones (*σφυρά*) are both strictly medical terms, and are only used in the New Testament by Luke, "the beloved physician." Mr. Blunt's remarks are very good: "St. Luke the physician is describing the miracle, and uses such terms as would be used by one possessing some surgical knowledge. Thus the word translated 'feet' (*βάσεις*) is one not elsewhere used in the New Testament; and expresses the sustaining power of the feet in standing, stepping, or walking, the word being familiar in its English form as 'basis.' The ancle-bones (*σφυρά*)

8 And he <sup>f</sup> leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. f Isai. xxxv. 6.

9 <sup>g</sup> And all the people saw him walking and praising God: g ch. iv. 16, 21.

10 And they knew that it was he which <sup>h</sup> sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. h Like John ix. 8.

10. "And they knew that it was he;" rather, "they took knowledge of him." Revisers, "they recognized him."

are so named from the Greek word for 'hammer,' given to them on account of their anatomical form. The words 'received strength' (*ιστερωθησαν*, Vulg. *consolidatæ sunt*) express the idea of the relaxed and flabby muscles being made firm and solid, so that they at once exercised their contractile power."

8. "And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." How life-like the description! It must be the report of an eye-witness. In all probability St. Luke received it either from St. Peter or St. John. First he felt the sudden infusion of strength, as it were by an electric shock, and "leapt up;" then he "stood," for the first time in his life, in an erect posture; then he made further trial of his newly acquired powers, and "walked." The miracle was so complete that he required to make no tentative efforts as a child would have to, but at once stepped forward.

"And entered with them into the temple." By this we learn that the miracle was not bestowed upon him in vain; instead of rushing home to his friends and neighbours, he thanked God from Whom, as the Father of Jesus, the restoration had come, in His own house, "walking, and leaping, and praising God." In him was literally fulfilled the words of the Prophet, "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." (Isa. xxxv. 6.)

9, 10. "And all the people saw him walking . . . amazement at that which had happened to him." Being the hour of prayer, the time of the evening sacrifice, there would be many in the Temple; and the report of the way in which the miracle had been performed

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch

<sup>1 John x. 23.</sup> <sup>1</sup> that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.  
 ch. v. 12.

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

11. "As the lame man which was healed held." So P., and most Cursive; but N, A., B., C., D., E., 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Arm., read merely "as he held."

would quickly be known by all the worshippers, or they would see by the excited way in which he, who was so short a time before unable to move, held Peter and John, that they were the doers of the miracle.

11. "And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John." As if, out of overflowing gratitude, he would keep them as near to him as he could. Some have conjectured that he held close to them under the apprehension that if he was separated from them he might relapse into his former state, but this seems unworthy of him.

"All the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's," &c. Solomon's porch is mentioned in St. John's Gospel (x. 23), as a part of the Temple in which Jesus walked and taught. It ran along the east side of the Temple, and the gate called Beautiful opened into it. The foundations of it were certainly built by Solomon. It is thus described by Josephus (Ant. xx. ix. 7): These cloisters (*i. e.* the Porch) belonged to the outer court, and were situated in a deep valley, and had walls that reached four hundred cubits in length, and were built of square and very white stones, the length of each of which stones was twenty cubits and their height six cubits. It is conjectured that in our Lord's time the foundations only of Solomon's work remained.

12. "And when Peter saw it he answered unto the people . . . why marvel ye," &c. Observe how the Apostle treats the miracle, almost as if it had been a matter of course, an ordinary thing, and so it was if Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. The marvel was that He Whom they had crucified was at the right hand of God, for, if so, His working of mighty works follows naturally.

"Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power,"

13 <sup>k</sup> The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, <sup>l</sup> hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye <sup>m</sup> delivered up, and <sup>n</sup> denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

14 But ye denied <sup>o</sup> the Holy One <sup>p</sup> and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

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13. "His Son Jesus." The word "Son" here is not *υἱός*, but *παῖς*, and *σαῖς*; generally signifies a child or boy; but sometimes, though rarely, servant. The two oldest translations, the Latin and the Syriac, render it "Son." The Revisers of 1881 unaccountably chose the lower term, and render it "servant" in their text.

<sup>k</sup> ch. v. 30.  
<sup>l</sup> John vii. 39.  
 & xii. 16. &  
 xvii. 1.  
<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxvii.  
 2.  
<sup>n</sup> Matt. xxvii.  
 20. Mark xv.  
 11. Luke  
 xxiii. 18, 20,  
 21. John  
 xviii. 40. &  
 xix. 15. ch.  
 xiii. 28.  
<sup>o</sup> Ps. xvi. 10.  
 Mark i. 24.  
 Luke i. 35.  
 ch. ii. 27. &  
 iv. 27.  
<sup>p</sup> ch. vii. 52.  
 & xxii. 14.

&c. They disclaim all credit for what was done. Notice how power and holiness are associated in their minds as co-ordinate. The reader will remember the words, "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John ix. 31).

13. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath," &c. Here the Apostle follows on the lines which the Lord Himself had used. The Lord ascribed all His mighty works to the Father dwelling in Him. In nothing does He separate Himself from the God of Abraham, and here His Apostle sets forth the mighty work just done before their eyes, as the direct consequence of the glorification of Jesus by the Father Himself.

"Whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined," &c. "Denied Him." They ought to have welcomed Him as the Messiah, for no claimant of Messiahship could be imagined to exceed Him in manifestations of Divine Power. They ought to have exulted in Him as, in His works and teaching, the glory of their nation, and the proof that God was yet with them: but they not only denied Him, but forced Pilate to condemn and crucify Him, when he had repeatedly declared the innocence of the Lord.

14. "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just." St. Peter, in bringing the claims of Jesus before his countrymen, would be careful not unnecessarily to set them against the acceptance of his teaching by putting into the foreground the highest Divine claims

15 And killed the || Prince of life, <sup>1</sup> whom God hath raised from the dead; <sup>2</sup> whereof we are witnesses.

1 Or, *Author*,  
Heb. ii. 10.  
& v. 9. 1 John  
v. 11.

2 ch. ii. 24.

3 ch. ii. 32.

4 Matt. ix. 22.

5 ch. iv. 10. &

xiv. 9.

16 <sup>1</sup> And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and

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15. "Prince of life;" rather "author." See below.

of the Lord to be the only-begotten Son. The first thing which had to be done was to show that He had been unjustly crucified, that He was the Holy One and the Just, and that God Himself witnessed to this by allowing such miracles as they had seen to be done in the name of the Crucified One. If this was established then all would follow in due course, then He was the Christ, the Son of God, then they would see the Son of Man, that is, Himself "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." It was for asserting this that their ecclesiastical rulers had condemned Him. If He had spoken falsely in saying these things of Himself, then He would not have been "the Holy One and the Just,"—then, according to the Jewish Law, the rulers would have justly condemned Him for blasphemy. But He had spoken the truth in the sight of God, and so God witnessed to His truth and righteousness in sending down the Spirit Who enabled uneducated men to assert the glory of Jesus in all the tongues of the earth, and had but this moment done this mighty work at which they were all in amazement simply in answer to the invocation of the Name of His Son Jesus.

"And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead," &c. This "killed the Prince of life" is a wonderful expression. It takes its place with "crucifying the Lord of glory," "A Lamb standing as slain," and other expressions in which exact opposites are in the closest juxtaposition. For the word "prince" most probably means author, and it is the word used where Jesus is said to be "the author and finisher of our faith:" so that they were killing, as it were, the very life itself. It is supposed that St. Peter used the words with such boldness because the Lord was known by all in Jerusalem to have raised Lazarus from the dead. Natural life, of course, as well as spiritual life, is included under the term.

16. "And his name through faith in his name," &c. His Name was the Name of power. "Faith in his name" is, of course, the

know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that<sup>t</sup> through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers.

<sup>t</sup> Luke xxiii.  
34. John xvi.  
3. ch. xiii.  
27. 1 Cor. ii.  
8. 1 Tim. i.  
13.

faith of St. Peter and the Apostles, not of the man once lame, for though he had piety and thankfulness, it is twice told us that he looked for nothing from the Apostles but alms. He could not have believed that the Apostles could have brought about instantaneous restoration, or he would have begged for it, not for alms. It was the Name of the Lord which had all power. It was the faith of Peter which drew down the exercise of that power. It was no new thing to Peter to heal the sick and lame in the name of Christ: but here was a case which demanded a strong exercise of faith in the Risen Lord. The man had been a cripple from the womb. He was about forty years old. He was one of the best-known men in Jerusalem from his so constantly lying at the Beautiful gate. But the faith of the Apostles rose at once to the occasion. There was no hesitation. "In the name of Jesus stand up and walk," and instantly the God of Israel glorified the Name of His Son.

"Yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness," &c. Here the faith itself is ascribed to the operation of the Lord. His name worked the healing, and His power worked the requisite faith in those who healed. So the glory from beginning to end was to God through Christ.<sup>1</sup> Faith is the gift of God, and so let our constant prayer be, "Lord, increase our faith."

17. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." They were ignorant that the Lord was the Holy One and the Just. They knew not that He was the Prince of life. And yet their ignorance was, in a measure, wilful. It

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<sup>1</sup> The remarks of Cornelius à Lapide, though somewhat scholastic in terms, are worthy of notice:—"Nota. Fidei tribuitur hic miraculosa sanatio, tanquam causæ non primariæ, sed instrumentariæ. Fides enim est causa applicans nobis merita Christi, per quæ sanamur: rursum fides est dispositio ad sanitatem mentis et corporis. Tertio, fides et invocatio est quasi causa impetratoria sanitatis; ipsa enim est oratio vel tacita, vel expressa, quæ sanitatem a Deo impetrat; unde et eam meretur non de condigno, sed de congruo. Causa ergo physica principalis curationis claudi fuit Deus, instrumentalis fuit S. Petrus manu elevans et erigens claudum. Causa vero moralis, puta meritoria, principalis fuit Christus, ejusque merita: instrumentalis fuit fides S. Petri."



18 But "those things, which God before had shewed" by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

<sup>a</sup> Luke xxiv.  
44. ch. xxvi.  
32.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. xxvii.  
Isai. l. 6. &  
liii. 5, &c.  
Dan. ix. 26.  
1 Pet. i. 10,  
11.

<sup>c</sup> ch. ii. 33.

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

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18. "By the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer." N, B., C., D., E., several Cursives, Vulg., Arm., Syriac, read "by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer," transposing "his;" but A., P., and most Cursives read as in Authorized.

19. "When the times of refreshing shall come." Rather, "That so there may come seasons of refreshing." Revisers, "And that the times of repose may come to you."

need not have existed within them. They might have informed themselves so far respecting the life and conduct of Jesus of Nazareth as to see that He was holy and just; and His miracles as done by the power of God, and always on the side of mercy and love, might have convinced them that He was no ordinary Holy and Just One, and that all that He did corresponded to the prophecies of the Messiah in their Scriptures. But their prejudices shut their eyes to all this. They looked for a Messiah infinitely below Him Whom God had led them to expect. Their Messiah was one after their own hearts, a temporal leader and deliverer; whereas God's Messiah was to come to make them free indeed—free from the slavery of sinful lusts—and such a Messiah they desired not.

18-19. "But those things, which God before had shewed . . . he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye, therefore," &c. The "therefore" (*οὖν*) seems to connect the verses thus: "What ye did in ignorance, compassing with wicked hands the death of His Christ, that very thing God had foreseen and foretold, and when He was thus crucified by you, God laid on Him the iniquity of us all, so that now the way of repentance and remission is open to all, even to you who pierced Him; therefore, on this account repent ye and be converted."

"Be converted." The verb being in the middle voice may be rendered "convert yourselves," or "turn yourselves."

"That your sins may be blotted out, when [or rather, in order that] the times of refreshing shall come," &c. Bishop Jacobson notices how this expression was much more forcible when tablets covered with

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

21 \* Whom the heaven must receive until the times of <sup>a</sup> restitution of all things, <sup>b</sup> which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

<sup>a</sup> ch. i. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xvii. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Luke i. 70.

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20. "Preached." Rather, "Appointed unto you," as in N, A., B., C., D., E., P., and many Cursives. "Preached" only read in Vulg., Copt., and a few Cursives.

wax were used, for then they applied the blunt end of the stylus to the wax on which letters had been written by the sharp end, and obliterated them altogether."

The translation "when the times of refreshing shall come" is universally pronounced to be wrong, and it should be, "in order that times of refreshing may come"—the coming of these times of refreshing being consequent upon the repentance and conversion of the ancient people of God.

No doubt St. Peter looked for the speedy return of Christ, God not having yet revealed to him that that return would be long delayed, and that the period of delay whilst Christ was in heaven would be "The times of the Gentiles." But very many places in Holy Scripture lead us to believe in a restoration of the Jews to their own land, and their conversion to the faith of Christ before the Second Advent. Thus Daniel xii. 1. St. Paul entertained this good hope when he wrote, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" And a little further on, "All Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. xi. 15, 26).

20, 21. "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive . . . holy prophets since the world began."

"Before was preached unto you." The better reading is, "which was preordained unto you."

"Times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken," &c. This restitution, as far as we can gather from many intimations in God's Word, will not be only spiritual, but physical. Thus this Apostle in his second epistle writes: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth,"—there

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, ° A prophet shall  
 • Deut. xviii. the Lord your God raise up unto you of your  
 15, 16, 19. brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all  
 ch. vii. 37. things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that

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22. "Unto the fathers" omitted by N, A., B., C., several Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Copt. "Your God." So A., D., Vulg., Arm. B. reads "God" only. "Our God" in N, C.  
 23. "Destroyed." Revisers render, "Utterly destroyed," the verb having the intensive particle *et*.

is the physical restoration—"wherein dwelleth righteousness,"—there is the moral and spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

22. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall," &c. In what sense was the Lord like unto Moses, seeing that Moses represented the Law, which could not justify, whilst Christ embodied in Himself the Gospel, which can? Evidently in this—that they were both mediators, and they both introduced dispensations. Moses was alone among the prophets and special messengers of God in this, that in the Levitical system he introduced a way of access to God, imperfect indeed, but still valid for all purposes of religion, and all the other prophets, David, Isaiah, &c., came to God through it, till Christ came, and He introduced a new dispensation, a perfect way of access to God through His own Blood, so that in the highest sense Christ and Moses resembled one another.

It is to be noticed that St. Peter quotes the prophecy in Deuteronomy very freely and not literally, giving the sense rather than the words.

23. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear," &c. This seems severe, but it is only what the Lord says in other words, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

24. "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after," &c. It is conjectured that Samuel is mentioned

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<sup>1</sup> The number of passages which indicate that this restoration will take place, not in some far-off sphere, but in this world, are very great. Thus Psalm lxxii.; Isaiah xi., lxxv. 17-25, lxxvi. 10-24; Daniel xii., and the last verses of many of the minor Prophets.

follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 <sup>d</sup> Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, <sup>e</sup> And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 <sup>f</sup> Unto you first God, having raised up his

<sup>d</sup> ch. ii. 39.  
Rom. ix. 4, 8.  
& xv. 8. Gal.  
iii. 26.  
<sup>e</sup> Gen. xii. 3.  
& xviii. 18.  
& xxii. 18.  
& xxvi. 4.  
& xxviii. 14.  
Gal. iii. 8.  
<sup>f</sup> Matt. x. 5.  
& xv. 24.  
Luke xxiv. 47.  
ch. xiii. 32,  
33, 46.

because he is supposed to have been the founder of the school of the prophets, which continued from his time till the time of the Captivity. There is no specific prophecy of Samuel respecting the Messiah which has come down to us. In 2 Samuel vii. there is a very glorious Messianic prophecy, but this is spoken by God directly to David after the death of Samuel.

Very probably many prophecies have been lost which were known in the time of the Apostles.

“Foretold of these days.” Not merely the times of the Messiah, in which Peter and those who heard him were living, but the times of restitution. The prophets spake, as the same St. Peter tells us, of “the sufferings of Christ,” and “of the glory which should follow” (1 Peter i. 11.).

25. “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God,” &c. This does not mean, of course, that they were the lineal descendants of the prophets, though some of them might have been, but that they inherited the promises made by the prophets. They were in the same sense children of the covenant, because they inherited the blessing guaranteed by the covenant.

“In thy seed,” *i. e.* in Christ, as St. Paul shows in Gal. iii. Being children of the covenant made with Abraham, to them especially and above all other nations, was given the promise of the Christ, and so he proceeds :

26. “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you.” “Unto you first.” The promise belonging primarily to the children of Abraham, the offer of salvation was first made to them.

Son Jesus, <sup>g</sup> sent him to bless you, <sup>h</sup> in turning away every

<sup>g</sup> ver. 22.

<sup>h</sup> Matt. i. 21.

one of you from his iniquities.

“God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you,” &c. The wording of this is very remarkable, though few commentators notice it. After God had raised up His Son, He took Him from the earth, and yet it is said here “He sent Him to bless you.” This teaches us that when Christ departed visibly, He returned far more effectually in the Spirit. At Pentecost He Who was exalted far above all heavens came again with power in the Spirit He poured forth.

“In turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” It is a question whether the word “turning away” (*ἀποστρέφειν*) is to be taken transitively or intransitively. If the former, then it is as in our Authorized—the Lord by His grace and Spirit turns every sinner who desires it from his sin; He gives him repentance, and faith in Himself, and a spirit of love and obedience. But if taken intransitively, it signifies “in your each of you turning yourselves away”—“provided that each one turns away from his iniquities.”

Both, of course, are in a sense true: but it is to be remembered that the words contain in all probability a reference to Isaiah lix. 20, the Septuagint rendering of which is adopted by the Apostle Paul in Rom. xi. 26, “There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” After all, the Messianic blessing, without which there can be no other, and with which there comes every other, is that by the grace of a risen Christ everyone should be turned from his iniquities.

CHAP. IV.

AND as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the  
 captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

¶ Or, ruler,  
 Luke xxii. 4.  
 ch. v. 24.

2 "Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

\* Matt. xxii.  
 23. Acts xxiii.  
 8.

2. "Through Jesus." "In Jesus," Revisers.

1. "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain," &c. Very probably Solomon's porch was crowded with Jews listening to the words of the Apostle.

"The priests," fearing for their influence, as the words of St. Peter accused them of wickedly bringing about the Lord's Death.

"The captain of the temple." Not a Roman, but an ecclesiastical officer who had command of the band of Levites who were the body guard or police of the temple, and who was answerable for the order and good behaviour of those who frequented it. Josephus tells us that his name was Ananus, and that he was the son of Ananias or Annas.

"And the Sadducees." The chief priests were then Sadducees, and so they would have some of the principal men of the city with them, for Sadduceeism, which was in fact materialism, flourished most among the higher orders.

"Being grieved." The word signifies being thoroughly vexed and angry.

"And preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." The Resurrection of the dead was that tenet of the Jewish popular theology to which they were most bitterly opposed. The question with which they had attempted to confound the Lord was one which involved the Resurrection.

If the Lord had risen, then not only was His general teaching, but His particular assertion of the truth of the Resurrection, put beyond all doubt, as He was Himself in His own Person the great proof of it.

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

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

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

<sup>b</sup> Luke iii. 2.  
John xi. 49. &  
xviii. 13.

6 And <sup>b</sup>Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas,

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5, 6. "Their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest *was there*, and John and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the High Priest," Revisers. Similarly Syriac.

3. "And they laid hands on them . . . It was now eventide."

"It was now eventide." It was three o'clock in the afternoon when the miracle was performed, so it must have been now late in the day, and the council could not be called till the next day.

4. "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed." This was probably the whole number of adult believers, and not those who were converted by the miracle performed on the lame man. Some, however, suppose that it was only the adult males—excluding females and children.

5, 6. "And it came to pass on the morrow that their rulers . . . gathered together at Jerusalem." The Revised Version gives much the better order: "And it came to pass on the morrow that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem, and Annas, the High Priest, was there, and Caiaphas," &c. "Gathered together in Jerusalem." This seems as if all within reach of the city were summoned, as it was an urgent case.

"Their rulers and elders and scribes." This seems to imply that the deputies of all classes who could be represented in the Sanhedrin were there in full numbers.

"And Annas the high priest." Though Caiaphas was the acting high priest, his father-in-law, Annas, or Ananias, was the representative of the ancient succession, and was acknowledged by the people as the only real high priest. Though deposed by the Roman governor Valerius Gratus, A.D. 14, he yet retained apparently much of the authority. He is supposed to have been the perpetual president of the Sanhedrin. Our Lord was taken first before him, in order, as I have shown in notes on St. John (xviii. 13), to give the appearance of legality to the whole subsequent proceedings.

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

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked,  
 ° By what power, or by what name, have ye done  
 this ?

° Exod. ii. 14.  
 Matt. xxi. 23.  
 ch. vii. 27.

8 ° Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said  
 unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of  
 Israel,

° Luke xii, 11,  
 12.

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8. "Elders of Israel." "Of Israel" omitted by N, A., B., Vulg., Sah., Copt., Æth., but retained in D., E., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Arm.

"And John." Lightfoot identifies this person with R. Johanan ben Zaccai, who lived forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and was president of the Great Synagogue after its removal to Jabne or Jamnia. (Smith's Dictionary.)

"And Alexander." Nothing certain has come down to us respecting this man. By some he has been supposed to be the brother of the celebrated Philo of Alexandria, and governor or Alabarch of the Jews in Egypt.

"And as many as were of the kindred of the high priest," &c. This seems thrown in to show that the independence and representative character of the council was overborne by the family influence of Annas, who being a Sadducee and a worldly man would do his utmost to bring about the silencing of the Apostles.

7. "And when they had set them . . . have ye done this ?" This is supposed to imply that it might have been a work of magic, or done in the name of Satan. It might, however, have been a question merely put with a view to open the proceedings. If it had been done in the Name of God, and had been a perfectly genuine miracle, this would not have exonerated the Apostles if they taught what was contrary to the law of God ; for such a case was provided for in Deut. xiii., 1-6, where, if the sign or the wonder given by a false prophet comes to pass, they are not to attend to it if the design of the prophet is to make them depart from the worship of God.

8, 9. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost . . . he is made whole." This is the first fulfilment of the promise of Christ, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought of how or what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father



9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel,  
e ch. iii. 6, 16. ' that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,  
f ch. ii. 24. whom ye crucified, 'whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

g Ps. cxviii.  
22. Isai.  
xxviii. 16.  
Matt. xxi. 42.

11 h This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

which speaketh in you." We cannot help noticing the astonishing change in the Apostle St. Peter. He who a short time before had for fear of a maid-servant denied his Master, now boldly and unflinchingly asserts Him to be the "Stone set at nought by the builders," and the only Author of Salvation.

9. "If we this day be examined of the good deed done," &c. Men are usually examined before rulers and judges for evil deeds. Here these unjust rulers examined the Apostles as if they were criminals, because they had done a good deed.

10. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel." Notice again the courage of the Apostle. He accuses those before him who had the power of life and death, of having crucified a Man so high in the favour of God that He raised Him from the dead, and now brought it about that the most astonishing miracles of mercy should be wrought in His Name.

11. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders." The Lord had said this after He had put forth the parable of the wicked husbandmen; but He then left them to infer that the builders meant themselves. Now St. Peter, speaking by inspiration of the Spirit, directly charges them with being those very builders who had rejected the counsel of God against themselves.

"Which is become the head of the corner." This is generally explained as the top stone of the corner, binding together the two walls, one of which walls represents the Jews, and the other the Gentiles; but Cornelius à Lapide quotes two passages of Scripture which seem to show that it means the foundation or lowest stone, rather than the top stone. He quotes Isaiah xxviii. 16: "Therefore

12 <sup>h</sup> Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, <sup>h</sup> Matt. i. 21. <sup>ch. x. 43.</sup> whereby we must be saved. <sup>1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.</sup>

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thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation ; " and again St. Paul in Ephes. ii. 20 : " Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." We in no sense rest upon Apostles and Prophets, except in so far as they rest on Christ. No doubt the Lord is both. He is the principal foundation stone, because all rest on Him. He is also the top stone, because all are united in one in Him.

The reader will remember how St. Peter recurs again in his epistle to this figure of a stone. It is not a dead stone on which all are to rest as immovable, but a living stone to which all are to come for life. " To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood."

12. " Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven," &c. The name of God is used in Hebrew to denote His eternity, power, and Godhead. When the wise man says, " The name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it and is safe : " he means that they who lay hold of, who trust in, who invoke the Divine power and goodness, are safe.

Now St. Peter here uses the name of Christ as being equivalent in power and goodness to the Name of God. As the Jew took refuge under the name of Jehovah, so the Christian, after Christ is revealed, takes refuge in the Name of Jesus. The Name of Jesus represents the power, goodness, omnipresence, grace, and redemption of Jesus, just as the name Jehovah represented to a Jew the attributes of the eternal and incomprehensible God.

But we are ever to remember that we are never to dissociate the Name of Christ from anything which He may have ordained for the salvation or well-being of our souls. A soul which, with a true penitent heart and lively faith, comes to the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, as much takes refuge in the Name and power of Christ as a soul which relies on a text of Scripture in its prayer. The reader will also remember how the Church of England uses this

13 ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,  
<sup>1 Matt. xi. 25.</sup> and perceived that they were unlearned and igno-  
<sup>1 Cor. i. 27.</sup>

text in her office for the Visitation of the Sick: "The Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey, be now and evermore thy defence; and make thee know and feel, that there is none other Name under heaven, given to man, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

13. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned," &c. The word rendered "boldness" should rather be rendered "plain speaking." It is the same word as is used in John xvi. 25, "I shall shew you plainly of the Father," as opposed to speaking obscurely, as in parables, or proverbs.

"That they were unlearned." "Unlearned" would better be rendered "unlettered." But in the ears of a Jew living at that time, it would sound like "ignorant of the Scribes' learning," or "ignorant of the Scribes' interpretation of Scripture." The Jews applied the term learning not to an extensive knowledge of books or nature, but rather to that minute knowledge of the letter of Scripture in which these rabbis busied themselves.

"Ignorant men." This is also a misleading translation. It is rendered in 2 Corinth. xi. 6, as "rude in speech." It rather means "common men," who speak the language of common life instead of the technical language of the Jewish schools.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be remembered that the Apostles, though ignorant of the learning of the scribes, knew that which was infinitely greater than all other knowledge put together, the knowledge of the life, acts, and sayings of the Lord Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a very good examination of the classical use of the word in Rose's "Parkhurst." Raphaelius produces a remarkable passage from Xenophon, "De Venat.," where that elegant and mellifluous writer, referring to his own easy and natural language as opposed to the obscure and affected style of the Sophists, calls himself ἰδιώτης, a plain man . . . and Longinus, "De Sublim.," sec. xxxi., gives it as his opinion, that ἰστιν ἄρ' ὁ ἰδιώτισμος; ἵνατοι τοῦ κόσμου παράτολι ἰμφοριστικώτερον, "a common expression is sometimes much more significant than a pompous one," and after producing some instances of this from the Greek writers, he adds, "These approach near to the vulgar in expression, but are by no means vulgar in significance and energy."

rant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 And beholding the man which was healed <sup>a</sup> standing with them, they could say nothing against it. <sup>b</sup> ch. iii. 11.

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

16 Saying, 'What shall we do to these men? <sup>c</sup> John xi. 47. for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them <sup>d</sup> manifest to all them that dwell in <sup>e</sup> ch. iii. 9, 10. Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

"Took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Some in the council who had seen and heard the Lord, recognized them as His companions. Thus we read in Luke xx. 1, that the chief priests and scribes came upon Him with the elders. Some of these must have been now sitting in judgment, and called to mind that they had seen Peter and John near the Lord.

14-18. "And beholding the man which was healed . . . nor teach in the name of Jesus." The courage and gratitude of this man is to be noticed. At the risk, probably, of his life, he stood by his benefactors, as a living witness of the power of the Name which they preached.

15-16. "When they had commanded them . . . we cannot deny it." Into what a fearful state of hardness of heart these men had got themselves! But it was in accordance with the Lord's saying, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded," &c. They had hardened their hearts, first of all, against the teaching of the Old Testament; then against the mighty works of the Lord, culminating in the resurrection of Lazarus, and His own Resurrection; then against the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, and its accompanying signs and wonders; and now, after an astonishing work of God had been wrought, instead of commanding them to spread it abroad, so that others in believing might obtain similar blessings, they commanded that it should be hushed up, as if it had been a deed of shame.

And notice how they forbid them to do the very thing by which the lame man had been healed—they were to speak no more in His Name: they were not to speak at all or preach in the Name of

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

<sup>a</sup> Again, ch. v. 40.

18 <sup>n</sup> And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, <sup>o</sup> Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

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17. "Let us straitly threaten them." "Straitly" omitted by *N*, *A*, *B*, *D*, 25, 40, 105, 127, 163, Vulg., Sab., Copt., Syriac, Arm., Æth.; but retained by *E*, *P*, almost all Cursives, &c. This is a very singular and suggestive reading. If the high priests said "straitly," they would have used the Hebraism, "With threatening let us threaten them," and it is very probable that they did so emphasize the word; but the oldest MSS., *N*, *A*, *B*, *D*, omit the Hebraism which adds emphasis, whilst the supposed later ones, *E*, *P*, and the Cursives, adopt the Hebraism. How is it that later MSS. the scribes of which could have no knowledge of Hebrew, adopted this Hebrew idiom?

Jesus. They confessed among themselves that they could not deny the miracle following upon the Lord's Resurrection, they could not believe it to be an isolated wonder, a sort of accident having no connection with the claims of the Lord. If ever men rushed against God with their eyes open, it was these Sadducees.

19. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them . . . judge ye." These noble words have been taken to assert the supremacy of conscience. They rather assert the supremacy of the authority of Jesus Christ. The Apostles believed that Christ came from God and went to God. They consequently believed that God spake directly by Him. They not only believed, but they had heard Him with their own ears give them command to spread His truth throughout all the world and preach to every creature. But here, in opposition to the word of Christ, was a direct command from men who were Sadducees—*i. e.*, materialists, and Scribes, that is, perverters of the law—and elders, who with the chief priests had crucified One Whom they knew to be innocent of all the charges laid against Him, to speak no more in His Name. Besides this they had been witnesses of the previous life of Him in Whose Name they spake. They had been familiar with its exalted wisdom, its holiness, and its power. It was not with them a question of

20 <sup>p</sup> For we cannot but speak the things which <sup>q</sup> we have seen and heard.

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p ch. i. 8. &  
ii. 32.  
q ch. xxii. 15.  
1 John i. 1, 3.

obedience to conscience merely, but of obedience to the express words of a Risen Christ.

This place is constantly cited or appealed to in vindication of courses of action which really cannot be compared with it. A man entertains some opinion which he builds upon some five or six texts of Scripture, taken without the least respect to the context of those places, without paying the least attention to the general tenour of the Word of God, and, of course, in utter contempt of the authority of the Church.

Such a man does his best to divide the Church by drawing away disciples after him, and when remonstrated with, cites these words of the Apostles. He assumes that he has a special revelation from God. He compares himself with the Apostles, though he probably has not one single thing in his life and character in common with them; and he compares his opponents to the Sadducean opponents of the Apostles, though in all probability they believe far more than he does the authority of the least word which fell from the lips of the Lord.

Now such a man does not assert the rights of conscience; he simply asserts the right of liberty of speech, which experience shows that it is for the best that it should be accorded to him. But let not the sacred name of conscience appear in the matter; for most men when they speak of the rights of conscience really mean the rights of self-will and self-assertion, whereas the men here who made this noble confession of obedience to God and Christ were men in whom self-will was extinct or well-nigh extinct. In writing this I am well aware of the extreme difficulty of drawing the line between what is human and what is Divine within a Christian. I am only pleading for this, that even a Christian man may confound that which comes from himself with that which comes from Christ.

Let us remember that the Apostles in what they preached and taught in no way intended to upset the authority of these chief priests, Sadducees though they were, in their own sphere. Their sphere was not the domain of faith, but of ritual—of God-ordained ritual which was to continue in force for even believing Jews until God Himself abrogated it by the destruction of the Temple. Long

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

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxi.  
26. Luke xx.  
6, 19. & xxii.  
2. ch. v. 26.  
<sup>s</sup> ch. iii. 7, 8.

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

<sup>t</sup> ch. xii. 12.

23 ¶ And being let go, <sup>t</sup> they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

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after this it was said, "Thou seest, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law" (xxi. 20). Nothing is clearer from the whole teaching of this book of the Acts than that to call himself or to assert himself as a Nonconformist would be the last thing which a Christian Jew living in Jerusalem in apostolic times would think of. In all probability those who were converted to Christ became more attentive to the ordinances of the Temple than before, and the Apostle of the Gentiles specially raised up to assert the freedom of the Gentiles from the Mosaic Law, in his defence boldly asserts, "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple have I offended anything at all" (xxv. 8).

Stier quotes some words of Socrates which are virtually the same as these words of the Apostles: "O Athenians, I honour and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you; and as long as I breathe and am able, I shall not cease studying philosophy, and exhorting you, and warning any one of you I may meet, saying as I have been accustomed to do" (Apology, sec. 17).

21. "So when they had further threatened them, they let them go . . . was done," &c. It is probable that in a large council of above seventy persons, dwellers in Jerusalem, there were some who desired to wait before they committed themselves against them, especially if they were Pharisees. They could see that if the Resurrection of Christ was proved there was an end of all dispute. Such men would urge the popular feeling outside, and be successful.

22. "For the man was above forty years old," &c. It has been noticed that St. Luke, being a physician, would be likely to mention the mature age of the man, as rendering any natural cure more impossible.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, "thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is :

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings xix. 15.

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, " Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things ?

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24. "Thou art God, which hast made." So D., E., P., most Cursives, Sah., Syr., Arm., Æth.; but N, A., B., Vulg., read, "Thou art He that hast made."

25. "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said." So P., 1, 31, 40, almost all Cursives; but N, A., B., E., 13, 15, 27, 29, 36, 38, read, "Who by the Holy Spirit by the mouth of our father David thy servant hast said."

23. "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all," &c. "Their own company." No doubt, the remaining ten Apostles.

24. "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voices with one accord," &c. It seems as if one and all, under inspiration of the Holy Ghost, uttered the same words. Some, however, suggest that one of them, as St. Peter, composed the words and the rest joined in "with one mind and one mouth." "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven," &c.

25. "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said." The true reading, that of the principal Greek MSS., of the Vulgate, and of Irenæus, seems to be, "Who by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David, thy servant [or thy son, *παῖς*], didst say, Why did," &c.

This is the first distinctively Christian hymn or act of praise in which the name of Jesus is mentioned. It first addresses God as the Creator of all things, heaven, and earth, and the sea, and then as the God of the Old Testament, Whose Spirit spake by its prophets, and in particular, by David in Psalm ii., a psalm which, however it may be in some of its expressions partially true of the temporal king of Israel, is only fulfilled in One greater than David. To whom but to the eternal Son could it be said, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath be kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him"?

Dean Perowne has some excellent remarks on the fuller applica-



26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

7 Matt. xxvi.  
3. Luke xxii.  
2. & xxiii. 1, 8.  
\* Luke i. 35.  
\* Luke iv. 18.  
John x. 36.

27 For ' of a truth against ' thy holy child Jesus, ' whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

27. "Holy child." See critical note on iii. 13.

27. "Gathered together." N, A., B., D., E., about thirty Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm., Æth., add, "in this city;" but P., 1, 31, and most Cursives omit.

tion of this Psalm to Christ. "He begins to speak of an earthly king, and his wars with the nations of the earth; but his words are too great to have all their meaning exhausted in David or Solomon, or Ahaz, or any Jewish monarch. Or ever he is aware the local and the temporary are swallowed up in the universal and the eternal. The King Who sits on David's throne has become glorified and transfigured in the light of the promise. The picture is half ideal, half actual. It concerns itself with the present, but with that only so far as it is typical of greater things to come. The true King, Who to the prophet's mind is to fulfil all his largest hopes, has taken the place of the earthly and visible king. The nations are not merely those who are now mustering for the battle, but whosoever opposeth and exalteth himself against Jehovah and against His Anointed."

27. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus . . . Herod and Pontius Pilate." The enemies of the Lord who surrounded His cross are taken to represent the two classes into which God had divided all mankind—viz., Jews and Gentiles and their rulers. Herod was a king, Pontius Pilate a ruler who with his soldiers and officers represented the Gentiles, into whose hands it is expressly said that our Lord was delivered, while the people of Israel were those who clamoured for His crucifixion.

Those who brought the Lord to the cross, and those who crucified Him were representative. They represented the worldly policy, the cruelty, the dislike of the truth, the insincerity and cowardice, the bigotry, the covetousness and avarice, which would, if gathered as it were into a focus, have certainly hated and endeavoured to destroy anyone whose life and words reprov'd their wickedness, as did our Lord's life and words.

28 <sup>b</sup> For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

<sup>b</sup> ch. ii. 23. &  
iii. 18.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings:

28. "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." I have shown fully in the notes on chapter ii. 23 how God foreordained or foredetermined, not the wickedness, but the course which the wickedness should be allowed to take. It may be well to restate it in other words. The malice and envy of the Jews, priests and people, was all their own, the outcome of the exceeding evil of their hearts. This evil would spend itself in some form or other against the person of Jesus of Nazareth if ever they got Him into their power. God, for the redemption of mankind, sent His Son among them, and delivered Him into their power. When in their power they desired to inflict upon Him the most shameful of deaths, one especially cursed of God (Gal. iii. 13). This they could not do of their own authority, for they had not the power of life and death: so they must deliver Him into the hands of a governor and people who had authority. By God's providence this governor of a people who had the power of life and death, and whose common custom it was to inflict this most agonizing and shameful of deaths, was then holding sway in Jerusalem, and so it came about that the Lord was delivered into the hands of this cruel people, that they might put Him not to any death, but to the form of death which was described beforehand in the Prophets, especially in the twenty-second Psalm; and if this was written so many hundreds of years before this time, it must be what God's "hand and counsel had determined before to be done."

All that God really did was to give free course to their wicked wills. The chief priests willed that He should be put to a death so cursed that it could not be supposed to be inflicted on any true prophet of God. By the providence of God, that is, by the foreseeing of some events and the foreordering of others, this was brought about, and so it came to pass that the Death of Christ had all the signs and tokens which marked it out as the all-redeeming Death.

29. "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants," &c. "Behold their threatenings," and take vengeance upon them? No, Grant unto Thy servants that they have no fear of such threatenings, but that with all boldness they may speak Thy

and grant unto thy servants, °that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

° ver. 13, 31.  
ch. ix. 27. &  
xiii. 46. & xiv.  
3. & xix. 8. &  
xxvi. 26. &  
xxviii. 31.  
Ephes. vi. 19.  
d ch. ii. 43. &  
v. 12.  
e ch. iii. 6, 16.  
f ver. 27.  
g ch. ii. 2, 4.  
& xvi. 26.

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal ;  
°and that signs and wonders may be done ° by the  
name of 'thy holy child Jesus.

31 ¶ And when they had prayed, °the place  
was shaken where they were assembled together ;

Word, so that even these powerful ones who oppose Thy truth may be won by it to receive salvation at the hand of the Lord.

"Thy servants, *i. e.*, thy slaves." The Apostles Peter, Paul, James, always call themselves the slaves of Christ ; not that they served in a slavish spirit, but to emphasize the fact that they were bought with His Blood.

"By stretching forth thine hand to heal," &c. The healing and the signs and wonders which were done in the Name of Jesus would not only relieve the distresses of the sick and afflicted, but would give boldness to those who performed them in their proclamation of the truth. No doubt the boldness of Peter and John before the council was in part due to their success in healing the cripple by the invocation of the All-Holy Name, and now they all prayed that this might be continued till all Jerusalem was won to the side of Christ.

"Holy child Jesus." No doubt this is the only proper translation. The Revisers have rendered it "servant," but they have not, as they ought to have done, translated the word *δούλος* of verse 29 by slaves, in order to mark the difference.

The word translated servant in verse 29 is *δούλος*, and has the same signification as our word slave, whereas the word which the Authorized renders "child" and the Revisers "servant" is *παῖς*. This sometimes does signify a servant, as our word "boy" does. More usually it signifies "child," or "son." Thus Matth. ii. 16, "slew the children." Matth. xxi. 15, "the children crying in the market-place." It is applied to the Lord Himself in Luke ii. 43, "the child Jesus." To avoid ambiguity, and to distinguish the true and only Son from the mere slave of the previous verse, the Authorized translation should undoubtedly have been adhered to.

31. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken." This

and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, <sup>h</sup> and they spake the word of God with boldness.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 29.

32 And the multitude of them that believed <sup>l</sup> were of one heart and of one soul: <sup>k</sup> neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

<sup>l</sup> ch. v. 12.  
Rom. xv. 5, 6.  
2 Cor. xiii. 11.  
Phil. i. 27. &  
ii. 2. 1 Pet.  
iii. 8.  
<sup>k</sup> ch. ii. 44.

shaking was the outward sign of the special presence of the Holy Ghost, and the utterance of the Word of God with boldness was the inward grace; so that their prayer was at once miraculously answered.

32. "And the multitude of them that believed . . . they had all things common." This is a repetition of what we learn from chap. ii. 44, 45, and ought for ever to render impossible the notion that in selling their worldly goods, and throwing them into the common stock, the Pentecostal Christians went beyond the leading of the Spirit, and that they were in a measure punished for such strict obedience to the words of Christ by the deep poverty which necessitated the collections for their relief mentioned in the Epistles of St. Paul.

I have shown in my notes on chap. ii. 44, 45, that there were special reasons why this Church in Jerusalem should adopt a distribution of property which was not followed in other Churches. I would here state that God seems to accord a special blessing to the works of those who thus adopt the Apostolic rule of absolute poverty and self-denial. The greater the sacrifice the greater the reward from Heaven. St. Paul was far greater in his original place in society than the other Apostles, and no doubt in the means befitting that place; but he gave it all up, and of all human teachers he has made the greatest mark upon the Church, and apparently planted more Churches and made more converts than any of his brother Apostles. The founders of the great mediæval confraternities were men who embraced a life of absolute poverty, and were the means of spreading and keeping alive a religion which, though one may not approve of all its features, most certainly made millions love the Saviour, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world. Wesley was a man of primitive poverty, zeal, and labours. What a tower of strength in the cause of Christian Missions has been the apostolic life of Bishop Patteson! One of the most striking ex-

33 And with 'great power gave the apostles <sup>m</sup> witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and <sup>n</sup> great grace was upon them all.

<sup>l</sup> ch. i. 8.

<sup>m</sup> ch. i. 22.

<sup>n</sup> ch. ii. 47.

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amples of apostolic self-sacrifice, and of the abundant reward vouchsafed to it, is in the life of De la Salle, the founder of the order of Christian brothers who for above two centuries have devoted themselves to giving a free religious education to the poor in France. He was a Canon of Rheims Cathedral, and possessed a large private property. He began with founding schools for schoolmasters of the peasant class. He soon realized that his great undertaking of supplying schools and schoolmasters for the gratuitous education of the poor could only be crowned with complete success on the condition of his own adoption of poverty in all its thoroughness. Accordingly he determined to resign his canonry, and spend his fortune upon the poor. This he did, and the reward of his self-sacrifice was the founding of an institution which has been growing ever since, which all the revolutions which France has undergone have not been able to destroy, and which is at this time the means of keeping up a religious education amongst the poor of France. This holy man seems to have taken to those features of his national Church which it has in common with Primitive Christianity, and not with the accretions of modern Romanism. For instance, one of the rules for his society is: "The brothers of the society will have a deep reverence for the Holy Scriptures, and in token of it they will always carry about with them a copy of the New Testament, and will pass no day without reading a portion of it, in faith, respect, and veneration for the Divine Word which it contains. They will look upon it as their prime and principal rule."

33. "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection," &c. Why of the Resurrection? Why not of the atoning power of the Lord's Death? Simply because the Resurrection was that and that alone which proclaimed the Death to be the Death of the Son of God, and so fully adequate to reconcile the world to God. The Resurrection stamped the Person of Jesus and His whole work as Divine. Besides, the Resurrection was that which was denied and spoken against, and so had to be asserted in the face of the unbelieving world; and a Risen Christ was the source of

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: ° for as many as were possessors of lands or houses ° ch. ii. 45. sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 <sup>p</sup> And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: <sup>p ver. 37.</sup>  
<sup>q</sup> and distribution was made unto every man ac- <sup>ch. v. 2.</sup>  
 cording as he had need. <sup>q ch. ii. 45.</sup>  
<sup>& vi. 1.</sup>

36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Bar-

36. "Joses." So P., 1, 13, 31, most other Cursives, Sah.; but "Joseph" in N, A., B., D., E., 15, 27, 40, 66\*, &c., Vulg., Copt., Syriac, Arm., Æth.

the power by which men's bodies were healed, and their souls turned to God.

"Great grace was upon them all," *i. e.*, "upon the whole Church," and the evidence of this grace is given in the next verse.

34, 35. "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses . . . apostles' feet . . . according as he had need." Here again we have the unique position of the Apostles recognized. They were more than rulers. They acted in the place of Christ, and so these gifts were laid at their feet as offered to God and Christ—not, of course, to the Apostles personally, but to the twelve as representing at once Christ and the Church.

36. "And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas . . . apostles' feet." This is the first mention of the companion of St. Paul. He is the only man out of the circle of the Twelve, except St. Paul, who is called an Apostle. Clement of Alexandria mentions a tradition that he was one of the seventy. Nothing has come down to us respecting his life except the few scattered notices of him in the Acts and the Epistles. An Epistle has been ascribed to him, which if not his is yet of the most extreme antiquity. Dr. Jacobson says of it, "All the external evidence is in favour of the traditional title, all the internal evidence against it." The Epistle is said to contain much that is supposed to be unworthy of an Apostle. It is principally occupied with explanations of the Jewish types as referring to our Lord, and many of the explanations seem to us far-fetched, and beyond measure fanciful. But we are not to suppose for a moment that every Apostle, in every

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

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“The son of consolation.” The Greek may also be rendered, “Son of exhortation.”  
“Of the country of Cyprus.” Rather, “A man of Cyprus by race,” as Revisers.

sermon that he preached, and in every letter that he wrote, was inspired so that his sermon or letter should be worthy of having a place in the New Testament. In all probability he was not preserved from mistakes respecting facts and misconceptions respecting the scope of the Old Testament, especially the typical portions of it. The conclusion of the Epistle, his parting benediction, as it were, is one of the most practical pieces of writing out of the New Testament which has come down to us from the apostolic age. I give it in full: “It is well, therefore, that he who has learned the judgments of the Lord, as many as have been written, should walk in them. For he who keepeth these shall be glorified in the kingdom of God; but he who chooseth other things shall be destroyed with his works. On this account there will be a resurrection, on this account a retribution. I beseech you who are superiors, if ye will receive any counsel of my good will, have among yourselves those to whom ye may show kindness; do not forsake them. For the day is at hand on which all things shall perish with the evil. The Lord is near and His reward. Again and yet again I beseech you be good law-givers to one another; continue faithful counsellors of one another; take away from among you all hypocrisy. And may God, Who ruleth over all the world, give to you wisdom, intelligence, understanding, knowledge of His judgments, with patience. And be ye taught of God, inquiring diligently what the Lord asks from you, and do it, that ye may be safe in the day of judgment. And if ye have any remembrance of what is good, be mindful of me; meditating on these things, in order that both my desire and watchfulness may result in some good. I beseech you, entreating this as a favour. While yet you are in this fair vessel do not fail in any one of these things, but unceasingly seek after them, and fulfil every commandment, for these things are worthy. Wherefore I have been the more earnest to write to you as my ability serveth, that I might cheer you. Farewell, ye children of love and peace. The Lord of glory and of all grace be with your spirit.”

37 <sup>r</sup> Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

<sup>r</sup> ver. 34, 35.  
ch. v. 1, 2.

The reader will agree with me that such words are worthy of an apostle—the son of consolation and “a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.”

“A Levite, and of the country of Cyprus.” He was consequently connected both with Jerusalem and Cyprus, for he had as a near kinswoman Mary, the mother of Mark, who had a house in Jerusalem, in which meetings of the Church were held.

## CHAP. V.

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

2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, <sup>a</sup> and brought a certain part, and laid <sup>ch. iv. 37.</sup> *it* at the apostles' feet.

1, 2. “But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, . . . at the apostles' feet.” This is the first intimation which we have of the mixture of good and evil in the Church—the first proof of the Lord's words that the tares should be mingled with the wheat, and that the net of the Church should gather of every kind. The account is evidently given as presenting a marked contrast with the conduct of Barnabas. He had lands which he sold, and brought the money, *i. e.*, the entire sum which he received, and laid it at the Apostles' feet. Ananias also had land which he sold, but instead of bringing the whole sum he brought a part only, and laid it at the Apostles' feet as if it were the whole.

In doing so he attempted to deceive, first, the Apostles, and then, through them, if they had received the money, and betrayed no consciousness of the deceit attempted to be practised on them, the whole Church.



3 <sup>b</sup> But Peter said, Ananias, why hath <sup>o</sup> Satan filled thine heart || to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?  
 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

<sup>b</sup> Numb. xxx.  
 2. Deut. xxiii.  
 21. Eccles.  
 v. 4.  
<sup>o</sup> Luke xxii. 3.  
 || Or, *to deceive*.  
 ver. 9.

8. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie," &c. No doubt Peter knew this by inspiration. It was the will of God that this first act of hypocrisy and double dealing with Himself and His Church should instantly receive its condign punishment, and so He revealed it to that Apostle who, taking the lead, would be His instrument, not in executing the discipline, but in showing to the Church why so terrible an example was made of these two sinners. If Ananias had fallen down dead in the midst of the assembly his death would have been considered one of the usual cases of sudden death; but inasmuch as the moment before his death his secret sin was proclaimed to the whole Church, it was manifest to all that his death was the punishment of his hypocrisy.

"Why hath Satan?" *i. e.*, why didst thou suffer him? When the thought first crossed the mind of Ananias it is probable that he recoiled from it; but when he thought of the honour and praise for piety and self-denial which he would receive from the Apostles and the Church, and yet that he would retain for his own use much of the value of that which he professed to have surrendered to God, the temptation overcame him.

4. "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not," &c. This, as I have before remarked, shows clearly that the surrendering of lands and houses and other possessions was not a law imposed on the Church, but in every case an act of free will. The property was Ananias' own: and when he had sold it, it was quite in his power to keep back part of the price, provided that he had mentioned to the Apostles that what he brought was only a part, and that he had good private reasons for not bringing the whole. In this case he would have received commendation for surrendering what he did, for there must have been

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

6 And the young men arose, <sup>e</sup> wound him up, <sup>e</sup> John xix. 40. and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

many such cases of partial surrender, as, for instance, when others not connected with the Church had some right or interest in any property thus sold.

“Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” This place is cited by all orthodox divines as proving the Godhead of the Holy Ghost. For St. Peter had asked, “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” So that, by the surest inference, the Holy Ghost shares in the Divine Nature.

5. “And Ananias, hearing these things, fell down, and gave up the ghost,” &c. All other ways of explaining this death otherwise than as a direct act of God’s power are futile. One writer suggests that the shame and agony of detection, the horror of conscience not yet dead, were enough to paralyze the powers of life. But I know of no similar case in all history of a man dropping down dead because his hypocrisy was discovered. And from the narrative we should learn that there was no time for the shame of exposure to operate, no time even to think about the consequences. The death seems to have followed instantaneously, in order to mark it to have been in such sense the visitation of God, as to allow of no explanation by “natural causation.” In fact, if natural causation creeps in, we have no certainty that it was the direct intervention of God with the view of punishment.

From what we learn from the history, the miraculous act of punishment in no way depended upon the will of the Apostle. There was no threat of retribution in the words of St. Peter, only the bringing of the full nature of his sin home to Ananias. When Ananias heard the words, “Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God,” the sentence of God took effect, and very probably its appalling suddenness was as little anticipated by St. Peter as by any of the bystanders.

6. “And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.” These young men (or younger men, νεώτεροι) were probably younger members of the Church, who gave their

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

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services for the many ways in which they would be required for a congregation meeting so frequently, as probably the collection of alms, the keeping of the doors, so that strangers should not be allowed to disturb the worshippers in the Eucharistic service, carrying the messages of the Apostles, and, as here, the burial of the dead. They were the first germ of the later diaconate, or subdiaconate, and inasmuch as in the early Church everything in the slightest degree connected with the worship of God was held sacred, they would probably have been set apart for their office by some religious observance.

"Wound him up." Probably in a sheet, or in grave clothes. It implies apparently that the cloth was so large that he could be carried in it, without any exposure of any part of his person, to the place of interment. Burials in such a climate as that of Palestine must take place very shortly after death, generally, I believe, the same day.

7. "And it was about the space of three hours after," &c. This ignorance on the part of Sapphira of the dreadful doom of her husband has been accounted for in various ways, one being, that the members of the Church who saw the death of Ananias feared to make her acquainted with it, on account of the effect it might have upon her. Mr. Blunt says: "It was probably part of this dreadful example of discipline that she was left in ignorance of her husband's fate, her own participation in the crime requiring that she should be brought before the Apostles to be convicted of it." But if she had been in the house of some unbelieving neighbour, or if she had gone a short way into the country, she might easily have been ignorant of it for a longer period.

8. "And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?" The wording of the verse suggests that the land was not only her husband's but her's—it is not, "your husband sold," but "ye sold." She had been a party to the sale, for she had the particulars fully in her mind.

9. "Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together 'to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, <sup>f ver. 3. Matt.</sup> the feet of them which have buried thy husband <sup>iv 7.</sup> are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 <sup>g</sup> Then fell she down straightway at his feet, <sup>g ver. 5.</sup>

together," &c. These words certainly imply more than a tacit understanding. They suggest deliberation, and no doubt some quiet discussion, in which they weighed the chances of discovery; for the words "agreeing together" implies agreement in, or after, speaking together, and also that if questioned they should say the same thing.

"To tempt the Spirit of the Lord." The presence of the Spirit in the Apostles, whether He would condescend to take notice of such a small matter and reveal it to the Apostles, formed, no doubt, a distinct element in their deliberations.

"Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband." This was not a denunciation of vengeance or punishment on St. Peter's part, but a prophecy. I have no doubt that she was the more guilty of the two, and probably suggested the crime at the first outset. For, if not, if she had acted under the influence of her husband, or if she had been passive in the matter, his death would have been a sufficient punishment.

10. "Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost," &c. Her sudden death, following close upon her husband's, seems to forbid us to entertain the idea for a moment that she died from any natural cause, as, for instance, from shame and remorse.

Let us now inquire more particularly what was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. Our view of its heinousness will very greatly depend upon our view, or rather realization, of the Personality of the Holy Spirit. Some rationalistic commentators have held the whole account to be so indefensible, that they have preferred to treat it as unhistorical. They say that it is out of keeping with the mercy of the Gospel, and so on.

Now the words of St. Peter, both to Ananias and Sapphira, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to deceive the Holy Ghost?" "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" teach us plainly that the manifestation of the Personality

and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

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of the Holy Spirit, and His presence in the Apostles and in the whole Church, formed the great aggravation of the sin. It is to be remembered that Ananias and his wife might have seen the fire on the heads of the Apostles, and had in all probability heard them speak with tongues. Besides this they were fully acquainted with the history of the Church, for they were members of it. We know the particulars of but one miracle of that period, they probably knew of hundreds. They lived then in a period of the Church's life when the Holy Ghost was all but visibly present. It was known and acknowledged by all that everything which the Apostles said was prompted by Him, and that every miracle which the Apostles worked was by His power. Their crime then was little, if at all, short of a conscious attempt either to deceive the Holy Ghost, or to act as if He were indifferent to truth and sincerity of profession. Without pronouncing it to be that sin against the Holy Ghost of which the Pharisees were in danger, when they ascribed the Lord's acts to the working of Satan, it was the next thing to it, for they acted on the assumption that the Spirit was indifferent to the grossest moral evil. Again, taking into consideration that the Holy Spirit not only acted daily and hourly in the Apostles and others, but that the whole Church through His indwelling was permeated with a spirit of the most exalted goodness and holiness, it was as like a crime committed in heaven itself as we can well imagine.

With respect to the future state of these two sinners we can say nothing. It is possible that their crime was punished so severely in this world that some mercy might be extended to them hereafter. as St. Paul himself expresses it, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. v. 5).

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was hypocrisy, and a tempting of the Spirit akin to blasphemy against Him. The excess of its guilt depended on the clear manifestation of the Spirit as acting in the Apostles, and so it seems to me it ought never to be used as a warning against common lying. In its fearful heinousness it can scarcely be repeated, unless God shall be pleased to restore to

11 <sup>b</sup> And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

<sup>b</sup> ver. 5. ch. ii. 43. & xix. 17.

12 ¶ And <sup>1</sup> by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (<sup>k</sup> and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

<sup>1</sup> ch. ii. 43. & xiv. 3. & xix. 11. Rom. xv. 19. 2 Cor. xii. 12. Heb. ii. 4. <sup>k</sup> ch. iii. 11. & iv. 32.

us the Pentecostal state of things. However, all hypocrisy in the Church, or in religious bodies, is of the same nature: for it most frequently takes the form of a profession of spiritual religion which implies complete self-surrender to God, whereas something in the spirit is withheld from God. All bodies of Christians put those who adhere to them in great danger of this sin who encourage a profession of spirituality in prayer meetings, or meetings for the exhibition of what is called Christian experience. Those who take part in such things would scarcely be human if they did not bring forward what they consider to be the best state of things within them, and "keep back" that which would be to their spiritual or even moral discredit.

11. "Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." It became manifest to all that the Spirit was not only one of grace and forgiveness, but also of holiness and sincerity. The fear extended beyond the pale of the Church to the vast numbers whom the report reached, and very probably all Jerusalem, except the hardened chief priests and elders, was awestruck.

12. "And by the hands of the Apostles . . . Solomon's porch." The signs and wonders here ascribed to the Apostles were, no doubt, miracles of healing, and were in contrast to the severe supernatural punishment of Ananias.

"And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch." That is, they frequented that part of the Temple which adjoined the court of Gentiles, and so they would be able to speak the way of life to all, whether Gentile Proselytes or Jews, who entered the sacred precincts.

"All" no doubt refers primarily to the Apostles. They seem to have all acted together as one man; but, of course, they occupied this place in Solomon's porch, which was one of the largest and most accessible of the Temple cloisters, in order that they might gather as many as possible around them.

13 And <sup>1</sup> of the rest durst no man join himself to them :

<sup>1</sup> John ix. 22. <sup>m</sup> but the people magnified them.

& xii. 42. &  
xix. 38.

<sup>m</sup> ch. ii. 47.  
& iv. 21.

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

13. "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them." This is one of the many places which show that, doubtless by the direct guiding of the Spirit, the Apostles occupied a separate position above the rest of the body of believers—indeed, from the notices of their separate action and teaching, the separate persecution which they endured on the part of the rulers, the fact that all money was laid at their feet, and that Peter as their mouthpiece revealed the guilt of Ananias and retained his sin, I cannot see how it could have been otherwise.

There is a persistent effort made by rationalistic writers so to elevate the whole body of the Church to the position of the Apostles, as to deprive it of its uniqueness, under the fear, I suppose, that if the exalted character of their place in the Church is granted, undue authority will be claimed for their successors; but surely to do so is to run counter to history. If the Lord had desired that the whole Church, as distinguished from the Apostles, should rule itself, why did He not reveal the guilt of Ananias, and afterwards of Sapphira, to the whole body? It was as easy for Him to inspire the whole assembled Church with the knowledge of their sin as to make it known to twelve men, or to one. It must have been mainly because of the terrible act of discipline just mentioned that no man durst join himself to them, *i. e.*, durst intrude among them or try to exalt himself at their expense.

That the words, "of the rest durst no man join himself to them," is not said of the Church generally is manifest from the next verse.

"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." The miracle of discipline in no way deterred them from joining the Church or fellowship of the Apostles, though it naturally made them shrink from asserting themselves before them, as some forward persons in every society would attempt to do.

15. "Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them," &c. This fact is mentioned evidently for the purpose

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick || into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, " that || Or, *in every street.*  
at the least the shadow of Peter passing by n Matt. ix. 21.  
night overshadow some of them. & xiv. 36. ch. xix. 12.

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15. "Into the streets." N, A., B., E., 5, 13, 36, 40, and some other Cursive add "even" (καὶ), "Even into (or along, D.) the streets."

of showing the extraordinary reverence in which St. Peter, and, of course with him the other Apostles, were held by the people. It seems to me to fix the meaning of verse 13 as applying to the Apostles only. It is the proof of the extent to which the "rest," "the people," "the believers," magnified the Apostolic office.

With respect to these miracles wrought by the shadow of the Apostle they, no doubt, were genuine. The people so brought into the streets were actually healed, or they would have been reproved for going beyond what was warranted by the word and promises of Christ. A parallel case is to be found in the miracles of healing wrought by the handkerchiefs or aprons brought from the body of St. Paul. All this seems strange, some make apologies for it, some treat it as unhistorical. But it is only in accordance with the unutterable greatness and mystery of the dispensation of which these twelve were the first ministers. For they had been the chosen messengers, the familiar companions, the friends, the brethren, of the "Word made flesh," of "God manifest in the flesh," "their Lord and their God." From Him they had received such promises as, "As my Father sent me, so send I you," "I appoint you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me," "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father."

Comparing then this account of Apostolic power with its antecedents in their companionship with the Son of God, there seems nothing strange about it. It is very great, very wonderful, but in the companions and special messengers of God it is natural. As Chrysostom says, "Earth was become a heaven for manner of life, for boldness of speech, for wonders, and for all besides. Like angels were they looked upon with wonder; all unconcerned for ridicule, for threats, for perils; compassionate were they and beneficent. Some of them (that were in need) they succoured with money, and some with words, and some with healing of their bodies and of their souls. Now they went about in the public places: with



16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round  
 ° Mark xvi. about unto Jerusalem, bringing ° sick folks, and  
 17, 18. John them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and  
 xiv. 12. they were healed every one.

¶ ch. iv. 1, 2, 6. 17 ¶ Then the high priest rose up, and all they  
 that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sad  
 ducees,) and were filled with || indignation,

¶ Or, *envy*.

¶ Luke xxi. 12. 18 ° And laid their hands on the apostles, and  
 put them in the common prison.

16. "Round about unto Jerusalem." N. A., B., Vulg., Sab., Copt., Syriac, Æth. omit  
 "unto;" but D., E., P., many Cursives, Arm., retain it.

boldness they attacked even in the market, and in the midst of  
 enemies they prevailed, and that saying was fulfilled, 'Be thou  
 ruler in the midst among thine enemies.'

16. "There came also a multitude out of the cities round  
 about . . . every one." This is the first direct indication of the  
 effect of the Gospel having extended beyond the walls of Jerusalem,  
 and also the first notice that the Apostles cast out evil spirits, which  
 they did so frequently during the Lord's sojourn with them.

17. "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with  
 him," &c. This was Annas, and "they that were with him" were  
 no doubt his relatives and near connections. One of them, Ananias,  
 brother-in-law of Caiaphas, is expressly mentioned by Josephus as  
 a Sadducee. Their creed, or rather their negation of a future state,  
 and of the Resurrection, was especially acceptable to the materialists  
 and sensualists among the higher ranks.

"Rose up." This means, began to take action. It does not  
 mean merely, arose from his seat or throne.

"Were filled with indignation." The word is the same as our  
 "zeal." It may mean either zeal for their opinions, which the  
 success of the preaching of a risen Saviour put in jeopardy, or it  
 might mean envy at the success of men whose influence with the  
 people far exceeded theirs.

18. "And laid their hands on the apostles . . . common prison."  
 Notice how they struck at the heads of the Church, never appa-  
 rently as yet at those below them.

19 But <sup>r</sup> the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people <sup>a</sup> all the words of this life.

<sup>r</sup> ch. xii. 7.  
& xvi. 26.  
<sup>a</sup> John vi. 68.  
& xvii. 3.  
1 John v. 11.

19. "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors," &c. "In that He useth the ministry of an angel, in this He doth according to His common custom, for He testifieth everywhere in the Scriptures that the angels are ministers of His goodness towards us."—Calvin. Several leading German expositors, such as Meyer, Neander, and Ewald, endeavour in various ways to get rid of the actual intervention of an angel. Meyer writes: "The *historical* state of the case as to the miraculous mode of this liberation, the process of which, perhaps, remained mysterious to the Apostles themselves, cannot be ascertained." And yet this same writer goes on to claim it as miraculous: "Every attempt to refer the miraculous circumstance to a merely natural cause (a stroke of lightning or an earthquake), or as Theiss, Eck, Eichhorn, Eckerman, and Heinrichs suggest, that a friend, perhaps the jailer himself, or a zealous Christian, may have opened the prison, utterly offends against the design and the nature of the text."

I cannot see that we can object with any reason to the intervention of angels, if such beings exist; and the denial of their existence seems monstrous, because it amounts to this, that we deny that there can be any intelligences, having greater powers in some respects than we have, between us men and the supreme God. If there are such beings, surely they must have some employments, and it is only natural that the conveyance of messages of mercy and the deliverance of those who are oppressed with evil should be amongst these employments.

20. "Go, stand and speak in the temple . . . all the words of this life." A remarkable description of the Gospel—"the words of this life," i.e., the eternal life, made manifest by the Resurrection of the Lord, which the Sadducean priests, because it was a life beyond this, opposed so violently. In the widest sense conceivable the words of the Gospel are the "words of life." They are the words which beget in us spiritual life, in that they beget in us repentance, and faith, and hope, and love, and patience, and godliness; and they are words which assure us of eternal life, for they are the

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

<sup>u</sup> Luke xxii. 4. 24 Now when the high priest and <sup>v</sup> the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

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23. "The prison truly." "Truly" (*αληθ*) omitted by N, A., B., D.; retained by E., most Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt.

"Keepers standing before." Rather, "at," as in N, A., B., D., and most other authorities.

24. "When the high priest." "High priest" omitted by N, A., B., D., Vulg., Sah., Copt., Arm.

words of "Him Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10.)

21. "And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning." As the crowds were trooping into the temple for the prayers which accompanied the offering of the incense.

"But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council," &c. Very probably this means not two bodies, but one very full one. The first word (the council) is Sanhedrim (*συνέδριον*), and the second (the Senate) is *γερονσία*, denoting the age of those called, exactly answering to Senate. Probably the meaning is "the Sanhedrim, even all the Senate, &c.," and signifies that every member was summoned to be in his place, as the suppression of the new faith was a matter of extreme urgency.

22, 23. "But when the Officers came . . . we found no man within." The angel brought them out unseen by the guard, upon whom he probably cast a deep sleep.

24, 25. "Now when the high priest . . . teaching the people." "They doubted of them whereunto this would grow," is rendered

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: \* for they feared the \* Matt. xxi. 28. people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, † Did not we straitly command you † ch. iv. 18.

28. "Did not we straitly command?" So D., E., P., all Cursive, Sah., Syriac, Arm., Æth.; but N., A., B., Vulg., Copt., read, "We straitly commanded."

by Meyer. "They were full of perplexity concerning them [the Apostles] as to what this might come to," or rather perhaps, what it might be. The keeper evidently could give them no account of the escape of the prisoners, and they did not know what to make of it, or how it might end. The word *γένοιτο* should not be rendered "grow" as that suggests the growth of the new religion, which certainly did not cross their minds.

"Standing in the temple," *i.e.*, in the domain of the high priests, over every part of which they had perfect control.

26. "Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence." Notice their passive resistance. By resisting they might have been the occasion of a dangerous riot, if not insurrection, as evidently they were now at the summit of their popularity, and any appearance of violence would have occasioned bloodshed in the sacred precincts. It is very probable that, seeing so large a body of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were on their side, they might have rallied round them a sufficient number to protect them from the temple authorities, and the Roman governor, seeing their real power, might have sided with them, and delivered them from further persecution.

27, 28. "And when they had brought them . . . intend to bring this man's blood upon us." "Did we not straitly command you?" &c. Here the high priest simply asserts an authority to which blind obedience was due. He ignores altogether the miracles, the fearful fate of Ananias, the unaccountable presence of the Apostles in the

that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, <sup>a</sup> and intend to bring this man's <sup>a</sup> blood upon us.

<sup>a</sup> ch. ii. 23, 36. & iii. 15. & vii. 52.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxiii. 35. & xxvii. 25.

<sup>b</sup> ch. iv. 19.

29 ¶ Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, <sup>b</sup> We ought to obey God rather than men.

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temple after they had been shut up safely in the prison, all which matters could not have been unknown to one who was watching the action of the Church with such intense fear and hatred, and he brings against them their manifest success, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." What doctrine does he here allude to? Evidently the innocency of the Lord, as witnessed to by His Resurrection, for he further adds, "and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

The remembrance of the Lord's meek and forbearing demeanour was fresh in their minds; perhaps the words of Judas, "I have betrayed the innocent blood," were still in their ears. All these made them now fear exceedingly, not so much for their doctrine as for their persons. At any moment when they were walking through the streets a mob of incensed Jews might stone them. (Luke xx. 6.)

29. "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said," &c. "The other apostles." It is impossible to suppose that all the Apostles answered at once with Peter, for that would have occasioned confusion, and yet the words imply more than that St. Peter answered in the name of the rest. It is very probable that after Peter had said a few words, several of the remainder joined in and confirmed what he had said, and manifested their willingness to share the blame with him, for it is to be remembered that on the former appearance before the council, St. Peter and St. John alone answered and asserted the truth of their teaching as from God, and were threatened.

"We ought to obey God rather than men." Thus they begin with the same profession of obedience to the will of God as they uttered at their first apprehension (iv. 19), and there was an additional confirmation of their saying, in the miraculous deliverance from prison which they had just received.

30. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and

30 °The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and <sup>d</sup>hanged on a tree.

31 °Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be <sup>f</sup>a Prince and <sup>g</sup>a Saviour, <sup>h</sup>for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And <sup>i</sup>we are his witnesses of these things ;

c ch. iii. 13, 15.  
& xxii. 14.

d ch. x. 39. &  
xiii. 29. Gal.  
iii. 13. 1 Pet.  
ii. 24.

e ch. ii. 33, 36.  
Phil. ii. 9.  
Heb. ii. 10.  
& xii. 2.

f ch. iii. 15.  
g Matt. i. 21.

h Luke xxiv.  
47. ch. iii. 26.  
& xiii. 38. Eph.  
i. 7. Col. i. 14.  
i John xv. 26,  
27.

hanged on a tree." Here at the outset is the assertion of the one fact on which depends the truth of all Christianity.

"Whom ye slew." Here, according to Meyer, the Apostle uses a word which fixes the guilt of the Lord's murder personally upon them. It (*διεχειρισασθε*) signifies "you murdered with your own hands." This purposely chosen and significant word brings the execution of Christ, which was already, in iv. 10, designated as the personal act of the instigators, into prominent view with the greatest possible force as being such.

"And hanged on a tree." Here the Apostle alludes to the particularly accursed nature of the punishment of hanging, as set forth in Deut. xxi. 23. Notwithstanding the curse of the punishment you inflicted, God reversed it by raising from the dead Him Whom ye had so hanged.

31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour." The word prince is *Archegos*, and is rendered captain in Heb. ii. 10: "The captain of our salvation;" and "author" in Heb. xii. 2: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." It is probable, however, that here it signifies Prince in the sense of one who not only leads and rules, but who gives royal gifts, which gifts are repentance and remission of sins. This latter is the direct result of His being a Saviour, and is the outcome of His sacrificial offering of Himself; but He gives it as well as repentance, in His capacity of prince or ruler. He gives it freely, bountifully, but to whomsoever He will.

32. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God," &c. The reader will remember how the human and the divine testimonies are mentioned together by the Lord: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you

and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, <sup>k</sup> whom God hath given to them that obey him.

<sup>k</sup> ch. ii. 4. &  
x. 44.  
<sup>l</sup> ch. ii. 37. &  
vii. 54.

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

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named <sup>m</sup> Gamaliel, a doctor of the law,

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33. "And took counsel" (*ἔβουλοντο*). So N, D., H., P., by far the greater part of Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, &c.; but "wished" (*ἠθέλοντο*) in A., B., E., fourteen Cursives, Sah., Copt., Arm., Æth.

from the Father, even the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John xv. 26, 27). The Holy Ghost spake not with an audible voice, but in and through the Apostles, and witnessed to the truth of what they said by the miracles which they wrought by His power.

"To them that obey him." This does not mean that the Holy Ghost is never given except to those who obey God; on the contrary, He is given to those who were sometime disobedient, that they may be turned from sin and enabled to obey God: but He would not be given to those who were wilfully disobedient in order that they might witness to the Resurrection of Christ. He is given for this highest of purposes only to holy and obedient souls.

33. "When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel," &c. The expression "cut to the heart," is a very strong one, and signifies, were "sawn asunder." Contrast the similar expression, "they were pricked in their heart," in Acts ii. 37. In the former case those who were pricked were pricked to repentance; in this they were as men who, being sawn asunder, vented their rage in imprecations and threats.

34. "Then there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel," &c. This Gamaliel is, on good grounds, supposed to be the Gamaliel, the grandson of the great Hillel, the founder of the more sensible and tolerant school of Rabbinical learning. He was the instructor of St. Paul, who, with evident reference to the training which he had received from him, speaks of himself as "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the Fathers." He was, we are told, one of seven great Rabbis, who received the title of Rabban, and was well versed in Greek as well as in Rabbinical

had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined them-

The third  
Year before  
the Account  
called Anno  
DOMINI.

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34. "To put the apostles forth." So D., E., H., P., nearly all Cursives, Vulg. (Cod. Amiat. P.), Sah., Syriac, Æth.; but N, A., B., read, "the men"—"put the men forth."

literature. The most discordant opinions have been entertained as to whether he died a Christian or not. By some he is supposed to have continued till the day of his death a most bitter enemy of Christianity, and to have composed a prayer against Christians to this effect: "Let there be no hope for them that apostatize from the true religion, and let all heretics, how many soever they may be, perish as in a moment." In direct contradiction of this there is an old tradition that Gamaliel became a Christian, but secretly at first, in order that he might the better maintain their cause against the high priest's party in the Sanhedrim; and a legendary account of his appearing after death to indicate the place of his own interment, and that of the proto-martyr St. Stephen, is given in Baronius, from Lucian, a Christian writer, martyred A.D. 312.

"And commanded to put the apostles forth a little space." It would have been inconvenient, of course, to use the plea which he set forth afterwards in their presence. They were acting in direct opposition to the decree of the Sanhedrim, and it would not have been thought right that it should have been said by a member of the Sanhedrim in their hearing, that the chief Jewish Ecclesiastical Council, in endeavouring to put them down, were opposing God.

36. "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody," &c. There seems here to be a mistake about the name. Josephus relates ("Antiquities," xx. ch. v. 1), that while Fadus was procurator of Judæa, a certain magician whose name was Theudas persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them and follow him beyond Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would by his own command divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded by his word. However, Fadus did not permit them to



selves: who was slain; and all, as many as || obeyed him,  
 † Or, *believed*. were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days

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make any advantage of this wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them, who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head and carried it to Jerusalem. This, however, took place in A.D. 45 or 46, and could not have been the revolt alluded to by Gamaliel, which, since it only involved about four hundred persons, must have been a much less dangerous affair. At the time alluded to by Gamaliel, about the time of the death of Herod the Great, there occurred, according to Josephus, *i.e.*, before the time of Cyrenius, a vast number of such abortive insurrections. "At this time there were," he writes, "ten thousand other disorders in Judæa which were like tumults, because a great number put themselves into a warlike posture." Amongst these was one Judas, whom Whiston, the translator and annotator of Josephus, supposes to be the same person mentioned by Gamaliel. Theudas was by no means an uncommon name. It is quite as possible that Josephus made an historical mistake as that St. Luke did. The occurrence mentioned by Josephus may have taken place years before, and may have been inserted by him out of its historical order, or he may have confused names.

37. "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away," &c. This man is mentioned by Josephus both as Judas of Galilee and Judas a Gaulonite. The first mention is in "Ant." xviii. i. 1. Speaking of the coming of Cyrenius, he says: "Moreover, Cyrenius himself came into Judæa, which was now added to the province of Syria, to take an account of their substance, and to dispose of Archelaus' money: but the Jews, though at the beginning they took the report of a taxation heinously, yet did they leave off any farther opposition to it, by the persuasion of Joazar, who was the son of Boethus, an high priest; so they, being over persuaded by Joazar's words, gave an account of their estates, without any dispute about it. Yet was there one Judas, a Gaulonite, of a city whose name was Gamala, who, taking with him Sadduc, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them into a revolt, who both said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery,

of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: "for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

Prov. xxi. 30.  
Is. viii. 10.  
Matt. xv. 13.

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37. "Days of the taxing;" rather, "enrolment." Syriac paraphrases it, *Diebus quibus describebantur homines argento capitali*.

"Much people." So C., D.; but N., A., B., Vulg. omit.

and exhorted the nation to assert their liberty. . . . All sorts of misfortunes also sprang from these men, and the nation was infected with this doctrine to an incredible degree; one violent war came upon us after another, and we lost our friends which used to alleviate our pains. There were also very great robberies and murders of our principal men." Judas himself was killed in this insurrection, and his two sons were crucified long afterwards by Tiberius Alexander, the successor of Cuspius Fadus. (Joseph. "Ant." xx. v. 2.)

The followers of Judas of Galilee are reckoned by Josephus as a fourth Jewish sect with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. They were the Zealots, who did such infinite mischief to the Jewish cause.<sup>1</sup>

"All, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed." But though dispersed long after Gamaliel's time, they reasserted themselves, and were merged into the Sicarii, or assassins, who were the occasion of the destruction of the city and temple.

38, 39. "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone . . . fight against God." These words, especially the last sentence, seem to betray a misgiving in the mind of Gamaliel whether the doctrine of the Christians might not be true. He was a man of sense and observation, and a watcher of events, and he may have been convinced that the miracles ascribed to the Lord and his Apostles could not all be deceptions; and if not deceptions, they were proofs that God was on the side of those whom they were persecuting. In the "Recognitions of Clement I.," chap. 65, Gamaliel is spoken of as "secretly our brother in the faith, but by

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<sup>1</sup> "But of the fourth sect of Jewish Philosophy Judas the Galilean was the author." "Ant.," xviii. i. 6.

39 ° But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest

° Luke xxi. 15.

1 Cor. i. 25.

p ch. vii. 51.

& ix. 5. &

xxiii. 9.

q ch. iv. 18.

r Matt. x. 17.

& xxiii. 34.

Mark xiii. 9.

haply ye be found even <sup>p</sup> to fight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had

<sup>q</sup> called the apostles, <sup>r</sup> and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 ¶ And they departed from the presence of the council, <sup>s</sup> rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

<sup>s</sup> Matt. v. 12.

Rom. v. 3.

2 Cor. xii. 10.

Phil. i. 29.

Heb. x. 34.

James i. 2.

1 Pet. iv. 13,

16.

39. "Ye cannot," A., H., P., most Cursives, &c. "Ye will not be able." So N., B., C., D., E., thirty-five Cursives, Vulg., Sah., &c.

"It." So C., H., P., most Cursives, Syriac; but M., A., B., D., E., Vulg. (Amiat.), Arm., Æth., read, "them."

41. "For his name." Rather, "for the name." So N., A., B., C., D., H., P., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Arm. E. reads, "of the Lord."

our advice remained among them," and this work is of very remote antiquity, being quoted by Origen. It is not at all impossible, then, that the tradition may have a basis of truth.

40. "And to him they agreed." The Pharisees having probably a majority in the Sanhedrim, would be able to carry their point; but not without a compromise, for those in authority, the Sadducees, would insist upon some notice being taken of their disobedience to the former ruling that they were not to teach and preach any more in the Lord's Name. They consequently beat them, no doubt with the legal forty stripes, save one. We are not, however, to suppose that this beating was the extremely cruel punishment inflicted by the Romans—it was probably with rods; no doubt it lacerated the skin, but did not penetrate into the flesh, as the thongs tipped with metal used by the Romans. The word used to express our Lord's scourging is quite different.

41. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." They, for the first time in the history of the Church, received the beatitude of their Lord, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you . . . for my sake." And the leader of them, years afterwards, pronounced the same benediction, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering, that

42 And daily 'in the temple, and in every house, "they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

<sup>t</sup> ch. ii. 48.

<sup>u</sup> ch. iv. 20.

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42. "Preach Jesus Christ," or "Jesus as the Christ." So N, A., B., some thirty Curatives, Vulg., &c.

when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. iv. 13.)

"For his name;" rather for the Name, the Name which is above every name. Meyer notices that the use of the word "the name" here is analogous to its use in the Pentateuch as applying to Jehovah. Thus Levit. xxiv. 11: "And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the Name;" the words "of the Lord" not being expressed in the original, or in the Septuagint. Also in verse 16: "He that blasphemeth the Name shall be put to death."

42. "And daily in the temple, and in every house," &c. In every house, rather, "at home" at their private houses. This may mean either in upper rooms in their houses, or by what we call pastoral visiting from house to house. Cornelius à Lapide remarks: "So good pastors feed and teach their sheep publicly in the temple, but also privately entering the houses of each, they instruct, console, exhort, and excite them to everything that is good."

"Teach and preach Jesus Christ." Perhaps, rather, "that Jesus is the Christ." If a Jew, who looked for the Christ as the final revelation of God, believed that Jesus was the Christ, he would necessarily and unhesitatingly accept all His teaching, all His example, all the functions for the discharge of which God anointed Him to be Prophet, Priest, and King.

## CHAP. VI.

**A**ND in those days, <sup>a</sup> when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected <sup>c</sup> in the daily ministration.

<sup>a</sup> ch. ii. 41. & iv. 4. & v. 14. & ver. 7.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. ix. 29. & xi. 20.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. iv. 35.

1. "And in those days." The date of this murmuring, as that of almost every other matter in Scripture, is left in uncertainty.

"When the number of the disciples was multiplied," rather, being multiplied. There must have been many thousand Christians now in Jerusalem.

"There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews." The Grecians were the Hellenists (*Ἑλληνισταί*). They were not Greeks or Gentiles, but Jews who had been born and brought up in Gentile cities, using the Greek language and the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. The Hebrews were the Jews of Jerusalem or Palestine, who looked down upon the foreign Jews as contaminated by dwelling among the Gentiles. Even to learn the Greek language was, in their eyes, a step towards apostasy. We have in the Talmud a curse handed down from the time of the Asmonæan kings, "Cursed be the man that cherisheth swine, and cursed be the man that teacheth his son the wisdom of the Greeks" (Blunt).

Under such circumstances it is not at all unlikely that the Grecians had good reason for complaint. Such national or caste prejudices are the last to give way to the influence of more enlightened teaching.

"The daily ministration." This seems to imply distribution of daily food rather than of money. By some it has been supposed that this distribution was by the Apostles themselves, or at least under their immediate supervision; but this seems impossible, for surely the Apostles, full of the Spirit, would, in a matter of this kind, have acted with such perfect fairness that there would have been no room for murmuring.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, "It is not reason that we <sup>4</sup> Ex. xviii. 17. should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

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

<sup>e</sup> Deut. i. 13.  
ch. i. 21. &  
xvii. 2. 1 Tim.  
iii. 7.

2. "It is not reason," or "fit" or "pleasing," Revisers.

3. "Full of the Holy Ghost." So A., C., E., H., P., most Cursives, Sah., Æth.; but N, B., D., Vulg. (Amiat.), omit "Holy."

"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said," &c. I cannot think, as some seem to do, that this means that the Apostles had up to this time, or were now called upon personally, to distribute the food or the alms. Supposing that serving tables means superintending the accounts, receiving vouchers, paying money, looking into cases, and such things, it seems that the Apostles earnestly desired to keep aloof from such things, because they must seriously interfere with, if not swallow up, the time to be devoted to preaching the Word. And, moreover, as these things were matters of common concern, representatives of the whole body of the disciples should be chosen to attend to them, so that the Apostles should be free from any of that odium which universally attaches to the distribution of alms.

3. "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost," &c. Much has been said upon the question why the number seven was fixed upon. Some think it was because of the sacredness of the number, or because there were seven congregations meeting in different houses or upper rooms, or because there were now seven thousand converts. I incline to the first.

It is remarkable that in avowed imitation of this limitation of the number to seven, the council of Neo-Cæsarea, A.D. 314, ruled that this number was never to be exceeded in any city, however large the population. From a letter of Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, A.D. 251, preserved by Eusebius (vi. 43), it appears that that Church had no more than seven deacons, though it had more than forty-six presbyters. But such a restriction was not universal, as Justinian sanctioned one hundred deacons in Constantinople. (Jacobson, in "Speaker's Commentary.")

4 But we <sup>c</sup> will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 ¶ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, <sup>e</sup> a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and <sup>b</sup> Philip, and Procho-

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In this first election to any ecclesiastical office, the multitude chose the persons, but the approval and the ordination to the office rested with the Apostles. "Look ye out among you seven men whom we may appoint over this business." Mark the qualifications. They were to be men of honest report, *i. e.*, of unblemished character for honourable dealing; but also full of the [Holy] Spirit and of wisdom. Every function in the Church, even to the distribution of alms, requires Divine grace and wisdom for its discharge, that it be not made an occasion of idleness or division.

4. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry (literally deaconship) of the word." "To prayer," is literally to "the prayer," answering to the prayers of Acts ii. 42, and would embrace not only private prayers but the public prayers of the body or congregation.

5. "And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen," &c. Of St. Stephen nothing is known except what is told us in the Acts of the Apostles. He is the first martyr or proto-martyr of the Church, and is called martyr by St. Paul in his prayer in Acts xxii. 20. He is said to be full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and it is a significant circumstance that he is the only one of the seven of whom this is said. Even in that first and brightest age it was not of every man that it could be said he was "full of the Holy Ghost." He was supposed by Epiphanius to have been, with all his brother deacons, of the number of the seventy. Dean Plumptre brings forward some ingenious arguments to show that he was an Hellenist of the city of Rome. Augustine says that he was a young man of a beautiful countenance, and chaste (*virginem*). St. Jerome asserts that in grace he was not inferior to the Apostles.

"Full of faith." Not merely of barren belief, but of courage which made him face the whole Sanhedrim with the courage of the Apostles.

"And of the Holy Ghost." This was seen in that special work

rus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and <sup>1</sup> Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch :

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 8, 15.

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and <sup>k</sup> when <sup>k</sup> ch. i. 24.

of the Spirit, conviction of sin, for he brought home to the Jews the teaching of the Old Testament respecting the sins of their fathers and their own sins in rejecting one after another the messengers of God, so that they "were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake."

"And Philip." The same who was afterwards the Evangelist of the Samaritans. He is only afterwards mentioned in Acts xxi. 8, as entertaining St. Paul and his company, and is there called the Evangelist. He was a married man having "daughters that did prophesy."

Of Prochorus it is related that he wrote a life of St. John the Evangelist. Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas are mentioned in the Roman Martyrology as holy men and martyrs.

Nicolas is supposed by Irenæus, Epiphanius, Hippolytus, and others to have been the author of the Nicolaitan heresy, of which our Lord speaks with abhorrence in Rev. ii. 6. The words of Irenæus are: "The Nicolaitanes are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the Apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practise adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." Clement of Alexandria, on the contrary, a contemporary, or very nearly so, of Irenæus, speaks of the heresy as arising out of the wrong apprehension of certain words of his in which he bid his hearers abuse the flesh in the sense of mortifying it, whereas they took it in the sense of indulging it without restraint. From the fact of two such men as Irenæus and Clement connecting his name with the heresy there can be no doubt that he was either the innocent or the guilty cause of it.

6. "Whom they set before the apostles . . . prayed, they laid their hands," &c. This place seems to set forth the necessity of laying on of hands on all those who are to be appointed to any office or administration in the Church of Christ. Stephen was already "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and yet the hands



<sup>1</sup> ch. viii. 17. they had prayed, <sup>1</sup> they laid *their* hands on  
& ix. 17. &  
xiii. 8. 1 Tim. them.  
iv. 14. & v. 22.  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. i. 6.

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of the Apostles were laid even upon him, not so much to increase his holiness as to testify that every member of the mystical body who had a special ministerial function required the special aid of the Holy Ghost for the discharge of that function.

And now we have to consider the important question, "Were these seven the first deacons?" Was this the first institution of the ecclesiastical order mentioned in Phil. i. 1, and 1 Tim. iii. 8?

If we take the account of their institution and work as given in the book of the Acts, we can scarcely believe that they were intended to be a permanent institution. They were elected and ordained for a very special purpose, one not likely to occur again in the history of any Church. They are never called deacons, nor do they ever appear in the history as serving tables, though doubtless they did. Two of them—the only two who are mentioned in the subsequent history—appear exercising a far higher ministry—that ministry of the Word which the Apostles claimed as especially their own.

And yet nothing can be plainer than the consent of the earliest Christian writers to the fact of these men being the first deacons, or, at least, that the diaconate sprang out of their appointment. Meyer seems to put the question excellently when he writes: "From the first regular overseership of alms, the mode of appointment to which could not but regulate analogically the practice of the Church, was gradually developed the diaconate which subsequently underwent further elaboration."

I have given a passage out of Irenæus. Cyprian (Epistle lxiv. to Rogationus) writes: "But deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose Apostles, that is, bishops and overseers; while Apostles appointed for themselves deacons after the ascent of the Lord into heaven, as ministers of their episcopacy and of the Church." And in the Apostolical Constitutions, which certainly represent the doctrines and practices of the Church in the beginning of the third century, if not earlier, we have a prayer at the ordination of a deacon, part of which is, "Cause the light of thy countenance to shine upon this thy servant who is to be ordained for thee to the office of a deacon; and replenish him with thy Holy Spirit, and

7 And <sup>m</sup>the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company <sup>n</sup>of the priests were obedient to the faith.

<sup>m</sup> ch. xii. 24.  
& xix. 20. Col.  
i. 6.  
<sup>n</sup> John xii. 42.

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with power, as thou didst replenish Stephen, who was thy martyr, and follower of the sufferings of thy Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

7. “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied,” &c. This seems to be mentioned as a direct result of the peace which was restored to the Church, according to the words of the Lord, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,” and it seems to have been an answer to the prayer of the Lord: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John xvii. 20, 21).

“And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” That is, of course, of the inferior priests whose work was to conduct the daily service of the Temple. The high priests and those connected with them no doubt continued in their Sadduceeism.

Wonder has been expressed by some commentators at this conversion of the priests. All sorts of conjectures have been hazarded to account for it; as, for instance, that the priests were wearied and disgusted with the nature of the sacerdotal ministration, and welcomed a more spiritual service. But surely if the Old Testament be, in any sense of the word, a Revelation of the Will of God, the office and ministration of these priests came from God. The Sacrificial was by far the most Evangelical element of the Jewish Religion, for it was that part of it which most directly foreshadowed atonement through the Blood of Christ. If then, as we hope, many of these priests had been devout and faithful in their ministrations, this would, under God, have led them to accept the doctrine of the one all-sufficient Victim. I have shown in my note on St. Matthew xxiii. 2, 3, that the priests as a body, as distinguished from the

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<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom, however, thinks that they were ordained not as Deacons, but for the particular purpose of meeting the reasonable complaints of the Grecians. “Whence,” he says, “I think it clearly and manifestly follows, that neither Deacons nor Presbyters is their designation; but it was for this particular purpose that they were ordained” (*in loco*).

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 ¶ Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and

8. "Full of faith and power." So H., P., most Cursives. E. reads "grace and faith;" but N., A., B., D., some Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Arm., read, "Full of grace and power."

Sadducean High Priests, are never found in opposition to our Lord, and that He never denounces them personally or their ministrations, as He denounces the evil interpretation of Scripture on the part of the Scribes. On the contrary, He vindicates the intrinsic holiness of the Sacrificial System against the Rabbinical Rationalism which would disparage it, by such words as, "Which is greater, the gift, or the altar which sanctifieth the gift?"<sup>1</sup>

8. "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people." He appears here and in what follows as an Apostle, or quasi-Apostle, rather than as a Deacon. All that is said of him in this and the next chapter might have been said of John or Paul, and is entirely apart from, and independent of, his work as a superintendent of the interests of the Hellenists.

9. "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines," &c.

"The Libertines." "This is not a geographical term, as the others are, but denotes Jews by birth, who, brought by the Romans (particularly under Pompey) as prisoners of war to Rome, were afterwards emancipated, and had returned home. Many also had settled in Rome on the side of the Tiber. They and their descendants after them formed in Jerusalem a synagogue of their own which was named after the class-designation which its originators and possessors brought with them from their Roman sojourn in exile, the synagogue of the freed men or Libertines." (Meyer.)

"And Cyrenians and Alexandrians." In Cyrene, the capital of Upper Libya, the fourth part of the inhabitants consisted of Jews, and in Alexandria two of the five parts into which the city was divided were given to them.

<sup>1</sup> See also my note on Luke i. 11, where I have given extracts from Edersheim and Godet respecting the divergence between the teaching of Rabbinism and the sacrificial system.

Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 And ° they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

° Luke xxi. 15.  
ch. v. 39. See  
Exod. iv. 12.  
Is. liv. 17.  
P 1 Kings xxi.  
10, 13. Matt.  
xxvi. 59, 60.

11 <sup>p</sup> Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and

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Alford understands three synagogues to be meant, and the number of Jews from Alexandria (where it is supposed there were 100,000), could hardly be accommodated in one synagogue. Meyer also considers that there were five synagogues mentioned.

“Of them of Cilicia and of Asia.” It is very probable that in the Synagogue of Cilicia there was a young man, Saul of Tarsus, who on account of his learning and zeal would be one of the foremost in opposing Stephen.

“Of Asia,” *i. e.*, a strip of land, on the western shore of what we now call Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital.

These synagogues would present the most important elements of Hellenistic life, and their opposition to Stephen would witness to his power as a controversialist in favour of the Messiahship of Jesus.

10. “And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.” If he spake to them according to the tenor of the speech recorded in the next chapter they would not be able to resist it; for their Rabbinical training would furnish them with no answer to such arguments.

11. “Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words,” &c. They would pervert and draw evil conclusions from misrepresentations of his words as they had done from misrepresentations of his Master's (Mark xiv. 58). No doubt Stephen had said that Christ was a greater Prophet than Moses, and they would understand that as blasphemy against Moses; no doubt Stephen had said that Christ, by the special appointment of God, would judge all men at last, and that they took to be blasphemy against God.

12. “And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes,” &c. The people hitherto had been so much on the side

the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council),

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law :

¶ ch. xxv. 8. 14 ¶ For we have heard him say, that this Jesus  
 ¶ Dan. ix. 26. of Nazareth shall <sup>r</sup>destroy this place, and shall  
 ¶ Or, rites. change the || customs which Moses delivered us.

15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on *him*, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

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13. "Blasphemous words." "Blasphemous" omitted by N, A., B., C., D., several Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac; retained by E., H., P., most Cursives, Arm., Æth.

of the Apostles that, when they were apprehended in the Temple (v. 26), the officers sent to take them brought them "without violence," fearing the anger of the multitude. Was this all changed? We can scarcely think so, for those who were well affected to the Apostles would naturally gather round them and protect them, whereas all the while such persons would form but a small part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Now the whole city would be stirred against the new teachers when they heard that their lawgiver was accounted by them as inferior to Jesus, and numbers who were before indifferent would join the outcry against one so prominent as Stephen.

13, 14. "And set up false witnesses . . . the customs which Moses delivered us." Stephen no doubt had alluded to our Lord's prophecy that Jerusalem should be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and that of the Temple not one stone should be left upon another, and that Christ had said that not the things which entered into the mouth, but that the things which came forth from the heart, these defiled the man. Such sayings would in the hands of malignant opposers be soon perverted into charges of blasphemy.

15. "And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on *him*." No doubt this was a supernatural brightness, not merely heavenly virtues and superhuman wisdom appearing in his countenance, but a heavenly radiance which struck every beholder, akin to that of Moses when he descended from the Mount.

## CHAP. VII.

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

2 And he said, <sup>a</sup> Men, brethren, and <sup>a</sup> ch. xxiii. 1. fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

3 And said unto him, <sup>b</sup> Get thee out of thy <sup>b</sup> Gen. xii. 1. country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

1-3. "Then said the high priest, Are these things so? . . . I shall shew thee." In this sermon or address Stephen appears to me to have one object in view, that of convincing the Jews of their sin in resisting the Holy Ghost, Who was so pre-eminently in Joseph and in Moses; and if they thus rejected these men, whom all acknowledged to have been the saviours of their nation, might not the same evil spirit of obstinacy and blindness have been the cause of their crucifying Christ, and now of their rejecting those who came proclaiming salvation through Him?

"The God of glory." Not merely, as some think, the God dwelling or appearing in the Shechinah, but the God "glorious in holiness;" the God "Whose glory is in the heaven and above all the earth;" the God Who had sworn that "all the earth should be filled with His glory."

"Appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before," &c. From the first mention of Abram's migration from Ur we should have supposed that he acted under the influence of his father Terah, for it is said, Gen. xi. 31, "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son," &c.; but from the word of God to Abram in Gen. xv. 7 it is clear that Abram himself had the revelation from God: "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it;" and that Abram and not Terah was the real recipient of the revelation is clear from the account in

4 Then <sup>c</sup>came he out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much*

Joshua xxiv. 2, 3: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood," &c. See also Nehemiah ix. 7. The same tradition of the earlier call of Abraham is alluded to both by Josephus and Philo.

4. "Then came he out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Charran," or as it is in our English Old Testament "Haran." This was on the way to Palestine, whether Ur be at Edessa or nearer Babylon, as at Warka, for in the latter case he would have to skirt the great intervening desert, and enter Syria by the north, where Haran was situated.

"When his father was dead." The natural inference from Genesis xi. 29 to end, and Genesis xii. 4, is that Abram left Haran on the death of Terah; but as Terah was two hundred and five years old when he died, and he begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran when he was seventy-five years old, Abram must have been one hundred and thirty years when he departed out of Haran, whereas he is said in Genesis xii. to have been only seventy-five years old. Assuming that there is no mistake about the figures, the reconciliation, if we are obliged to seek one, is, that Abram, though mentioned first, was the youngest of the sons of Terah, and that his name comes first in Genesis xi. 26, because to him was the promise given that he should be the Father of God's chosen people. When it is said Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran, it is clear that he did not beget them all at one time in his seventieth year. And judging from the lives of the Patriarchs, the interval may have been very great between the birth of the three.

5. "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on," &c. That Abraham had no God-given inheritance whatsoever in the land of Canaan, is brought out very emphatically by the fact that he had to purchase of the children of

as to set his foot on: <sup>d</sup> yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

<sup>d</sup> Gen. xii. 7.  
& xiii. 15. &  
xv. 3, 18. &  
xvii. 8. &  
xxvi. 3.  
<sup>e</sup> Gen. xv. 13,  
16.

6 And God spake on this wise, <sup>e</sup> That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil <sup>f</sup> four hundred years.

<sup>f</sup> Exod. xii. 40.  
Gal. iii. 17.

7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and <sup>g</sup> serve me in this <sup>h</sup> place.

<sup>h</sup> Exod. iii. 12.

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Heth a possession of a burial-place for Terah. If he had possessed a single acre which he could call his own, he would not have done this.

6. "And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn . . . four hundred years." This four hundred years is the time of which God spake to Abram in Genesis xv. 13, and expresses in round numbers the whole time between the birth of Isaac or thereabouts and the Exodus; for during all this time Abram and his descendants were sojourners, and Palestine was to them at first a strange land, *i.e.*, "a land not theirs." The time of the sojourning as strangers in Palestine was two hundred and fifteen years, and the time spent in Egypt was also two hundred and fifteen, making the four hundred and thirty of Exodus xii. 40.

7. "And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God." God judged or punished the Egyptians by the plagues, by which, according to their own confessions, "Egypt was destroyed." Exod. x. 7.

"And after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place." This is evidently an allusion to God's promise in Exod. iii. 12: "Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee. When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." It is doubtful in what sense St. Stephen quotes these latter words; whether he means in the land of Palestine, or rather in Horeb. If the latter, it is probable that he intends to remind the Jews that every place in which God is pleased to manifest His peculiar presence, is sanctified by that presence. There were places sanctified



- 8<sup>b</sup> And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: <sup>1</sup>and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; <sup>k</sup> and Isaac *begat* Jacob; and <sup>1</sup>Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.
- 9<sup>m</sup> And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: <sup>n</sup> but God was with him,
- 10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, <sup>o</sup> and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.
- <sup>b</sup> Gen. xvii. 9, 10, 11.  
<sup>c</sup> Gen. xxi. 2, 3, 4.  
<sup>k</sup> Gen. xxv. 26.  
<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxix. 31, &c. & xxx. 5, &c. & xxxv. 18, 23.  
<sup>m</sup> Gen. xxxvii. 4, 11, 28. Ps. cv. 17.  
<sup>n</sup> Gen. xxxix. 2, 21, 23.  
<sup>o</sup> Gen. xli. 37. & xlii. 6.

by the presence of God before the Temple, which they regarded with almost idolatrous veneration, was in existence; and if God be pleased to remove His presence from the Temple it will cease to be sanctified.

8. "And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham," &c. Why this particular reference to circumcision, for it is called the "covenant of circumcision"? If it has any special significance, it must be that Abraham's call and his election, and the promise made to him, and, we may add, his justification (Gen. xv. 6), were all anterior to his circumcision, and so Stephen's hearers ought to infer that there may be a calling and election and justification apart from circumcision.

9, 10. "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him . . . all his house." It has been objected that they sold him to Midianites; but these Midianites were on their way to Egypt, and so Joseph afterwards says to them, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt."

St. Stephen adduces two cases of men chosen of God and holy in life, each one of whom was in his turn the deliverer and saviour of his people, and yet the people rejected both. Joseph was one in whom the Spirit of God was (Gen. xli. 38), and yet his brethren, who represented the Jews, betrayed him, as their descendants had just betrayed a Greater than Joseph; and as it was with Joseph so it might be, so it would be, with Jesus Christ, of Whom Joseph was one of the most eminent types. He was hated, rejected, betrayed, and crucified, and now God had made Him governor, not over Egypt, but over all the world; and the time was coming when His brethren would bow down to Him, and seek forgiveness.

11 <sup>p</sup> Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers <sup>p</sup> Gen. xli. 64. found no sustenance.

12 <sup>q</sup> But when Jacob heard that there was corn <sup>q</sup> Gen. xlii. 1. in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

13 <sup>r</sup> And at the second *time* Joseph was made <sup>r</sup> Gen. xlv. 4, known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was <sup>16.</sup> made known unto Pharaoh.

14 <sup>s</sup> Then sent Joseph, and called his father <sup>s</sup> Gen. xlv. 9, Jacob to *him*, and <sup>t</sup> all his kindred, threescore and <sup>t</sup> Gen. xlvi. 27, fifteen souls. <sup>Deut. x. 22.</sup>

15 <sup>u</sup> So Jacob went down into Egypt, <sup>v</sup> and died, <sup>u</sup> Gen. xlv. 5, he, and our fathers, <sup>v</sup> Gen. xlix. 33. Exod. i. 6.

16 And <sup>x</sup> were carried over into Sychem, and <sup>x</sup> Exod. xiii. 19. Josh. xxiv. 32.

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12. "In Egypt." So D., H., P., and most Cursives; but "he sent out our fathers first into Egypt" read in N, A., B., C., E.

11-15. "Now there came a dearth . . . died, he, and our fathers."

14. "Threescore and fifteen souls." This is the number, as it stands in the Septuagint, with which Stephen, being an Hellenist, would be most likely more familiar. Also the Syriac reads the same. It seems impossible at this distance of time to decide whether the exact number is seventy or seventy-five. If we reckon the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, as they ought to be reckoned, as heads of tribes, then the number is seventy-five. Josephus reckons seventy, Philo seventy-five. St. Stephen, no doubt, if his burning zeal for infinitely higher lessons allowed him to think about such a matter at all, would certainly adhere to the Septuagint and Syriac computation.

16. "And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham," &c. There is a very considerable difficulty in the matter of reconciling this assertion of St. Stephen with the history in Genesis, because Abraham is never said to have bought a field of Hamor (or Emmor) the father of Sychem. The only land which he bought was in a very different place, the cave of Machpelah and the field adjoining, whilst, on the contrary, Jacob is said (Genesis xxxiii. 19), to have bought a parcel of a field where he had spread his tent, at

laid in 'the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.

7 Gen. xxiii.  
16. & xxxiii.

19.

8 Gen. xv. 13.  
ver. 6.

17 But when 'the time of the promise drew

the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money (or rather "lambs," as is read in the margin) There may be two modes of reconciliation. First, that there was a mistake either in the original speech, or in the earliest copies, in substituting Abraham for Jacob, and I cannot see that there is any difficulty about a mistake, even in the original speech. Stephen was under the *highest* inspiration of God's Spirit, by which inspiration he was, as it were, carried away with his subject, which was to set forth before the Jews, from their own Scriptures, how their whole history was a history of the rejection, on their part, of men in whom the Spirit of God dwelt. Such a man, being full of godly zeal and righteous indignation, would be more apt to make slips in history or numbers than one who spoke more coolly and with more care about minor details than about the conviction of his hearers of their sin in grieving the Spirit of God.

But if men insist that the Spirit was bound to keep St. Stephen free from all possible mistakes in history and chronology and numbers, and so forth, then it may be that Abraham, as we know, on his entrance into Canaan, rested first at Shechem, or Sychem, where he built an altar unto the Lord, and for that purpose bought a parcel of ground which he might consecrate to God, and that long after, Jacob, on his way back to Palestine, recovered this piece of ground as being his ancestral possession, with, as he says, his sword and his bow, and it may be, generously paid for it, or added something to it, which accounts for the notice of the transaction in Gen. xxxiii. 19. There is this to be said for this latter hypothesis, that it explains why Jacob should on one occasion, and on one only, resort to earthly weapons to obtain a piece of land. He considered that it rightly belonged to his family, and so he recovered possession by force.

With respect to the burial-place of Jacob, it was in the cave of Machpelah, but Joseph, and most probably his brethren, were buried in Shechem. Joshua xxiv. 32.

17. "But when the time of the promise drew nigh . . . multiplied in Egypt." This multiplication was in a manner miraculous,

nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, <sup>a</sup>the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

<sup>a</sup> Exod. i. 7, 8.  
<sup>9.</sup> Ps. cv. 24,  
25.

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, <sup>b</sup>so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. i. 22.

20 <sup>c</sup>In which time Moses was born, and <sup>d</sup>was <sup>e</sup>exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months :

<sup>c</sup> Exod. ii. 2.  
<sup>d</sup> Heb. xi. 23.  
<sup>e</sup> Or, fair to God.

17. "Had sworn." So H., P., 31, 61, most Cursives, Syriac, Copt.; but N., A., B., C., Vulg., "Had confessed," *i. e.*, vouchsafed or given.

18. "Another king arose." N., A., B., C., Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Arm., Æth., read, "over Egypt;" but omitted by D., E., H., P., and most Cursives.

19. "So that they cast out." See below. *Ut exponat* (Vulg.).

and could easily and almost imperceptibly be brought about by God somewhat increasing the rate of births and diminishing the rate of deaths amongst the Israelites.

18. "Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph." According to Josephus there was a change of dynasty: "Having in length of time forgotten the benefits they had received from Joseph, particularly the crown being now come into another family."

According to Sir G. Wilkinson, this new king was Amasis, or Ames, the first of the eighteenth dynasty, or that of the Diospolitans, from Thebes. (Gloag.)

19. "The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children." The wording of the original implies that a part of the "evil entreating" was to force the children to be exposed (*ἐκίκωσε τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν τοῦ ποιεῖν ἕκθερα τὰ βρέφη αὐτῶν*). The Syriac renders, "and commanded that their children should be cast away."

20. "In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair." Exceeding fair—literally, fair to God, a Hebraism indicating a very strong superlative. Josephus enlarges upon this. "It frequently happened that those that met him as he was carried along the road, were obliged to turn again upon seeing the child; that they left what they were about, and stood a long while to look on him."

21 And <sup>e</sup> when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took  
<sup>e</sup> Exod. ii. 9-10. him up, and nourished him for her own son.

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of  
<sup>f</sup> Luke xxiv. 19. the Egyptians, and was <sup>f</sup> mighty in words and in  
 deeds.

23 <sup>g</sup> And when he was full forty years old, it  
<sup>g</sup> Exod. ii. 11, 12.

21. "And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished," &c. It is said that her name was Thermuthis, and that having no children she obtained for her adopted son, that he should be the heir of Egypt. Hebrews xi. 24, 25, 26 implies that he gave up no mean prospects in Egypt when he cast in his lot with the Israelites.

22. "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," &c. This, though it is not expressly mentioned in the Pentateuch, seems natural. It implies that he had the best education which the court of Pharaoh could afford; in which case, of course, his instructors would be the priests. Philo also relates that he was instructed by Chaldean, Greek, and Assyrian teachers.

"And was mighty in words." This seems contrary to Exod. iv. 10: "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." It has been supposed that during his long sojourn as a shepherd in the wilderness he had lost his original eloquence, but though slow of speech he may have been, as Josephus records, very persuasive. We can hardly judge of his eloquence by the exceeding sublimity of passages in the book of Deuteronomy, because we know not how much of that may have been due to direct inspiration.

"Mighty in deeds." It is not to be taken as meaning miraculous deeds, for St. Stephen is referring to a time before he brought the plagues on Egypt and divided the sea. He more probably refers to such very circumstantial accounts of his prowess as we read in Josephus, such as his being put at the head of the Egyptian army and delivering Egypt out of the power of the Ethiopians who had enslaved it.

23-25. "And when he was full forty years old . . . but they understood not." This is an almost exact reproduction of the account in Exodus ii. 11-15, but the connecting particle "for" is not

came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian :

25 || For he supposed his brethren would have | Or, *Now*. understood how that God by his hand would deliver them : but they understood not.

26 <sup>h</sup> And the next day he shewed himself unto <sup>h</sup> Exod. ii. 13. them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren ; why do ye wrong one to another ?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, <sup>1</sup> Who made thee a ruler and a judge <sup>1</sup> See Luke xii. 14. ch. iv. 7. over us ?

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday ?

29 <sup>\*</sup> Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a <sup>\*</sup> Exod. ii. 15, 22. & iv. 20. & xviii. 3, 4. stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

in the original, and gives a wrong meaning altogether ; he did not smite the Egyptian because he supposed that his brethren would look upon him as their deliverer, and take his side. On the contrary, we learn from Exodus ii. 12 that "he looked this way and that, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian." St. Stephen in all probability refers to some communication, at this time, between Moses and the heads or elders of Israel which has not come down to us. We are to remember that the hearers of Stephen had an immense amount of knowledge respecting the founders of their nation, which is not contained in the Old Testament, some of which remains in the writings of Josephus and Philo, and would not be found there unless it had been universally known and acknowledged.

26-29. "And the next day . . . land of Madian, where he begat two sons." This may be introduced as simply a stage in the narrative accounting for the fact that Moses received his first important revelation in the vicinity of Sinai ; but there may be an allusion to another "setting at one," or "atonement," by a Greater than

30 <sup>1</sup> And when forty years were expired, there appeared to <sup>1</sup> Exod. iii. 2. him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

31 When Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxii. 32 *Saying,* <sup>m</sup> I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

<sup>n</sup> Exod. iii. 5. 33 <sup>n</sup> Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy <sup>Josh. v. 15.</sup>

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30. "An angel of the Lord." So D., E., H., P., most Cursive, Syriac, Arm., Æth.; but "of the Lord" omitted in N, A., B., C., 61, 81, Vulg., Sah., Copt.

Moses, which Stephen's hearers had rejected. The teaching of Christ was pre-eminently a setting men at one with another. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do to them;" "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" "Which of these, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves?"

30. "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord," &c. The account by St. Stephen is the same exactly as that in Exodus. First it is said that the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the bush; then when he turned aside to see the great sight, God Himself called unto him out of the midst of the bush. How is it that an angel of God is thus seemingly identified with God? The solution is to be found in Isaiah lxiii. 9. This was He Who is there called "the angel of His presence," and in Malachi the "angel of the covenant," and was no doubt the Eternal Word, the Son of God, through Whom and in Whom the Father has always manifested Himself.

31-34. "When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight. . . I will send thee into Egypt." "He wondered at the sight." In Exodus it is, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet." It is to be carefully and reverently noticed that on the two occasions on which God personally manifests Himself, first as recorded in Exodus iii. 5, and then

shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

34 ° I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my ° Exod. iii. 7. people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

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in Joshua v. 15, He commands that Moses in the one case and Joshua in the other should loose their shoes from off their feet, and for the same reason in each case, that there was a peculiar Divine Presence which made every place where it manifested itself holy. Now this is not a truth or principle which disappeared with the old state of things; on the contrary, the Lord asserts it very emphatically on each occasion when He cleansed the Temple (John ii. 15, 16, 17; Matth. xxi. 12, 13), and when He would not allow men to carry even a vessel through the Temple. In this He showed that the special presence of God made some places far holier than others, and that places dedicated to God's worship are not to be treated as places not so dedicated. Reverence, then, for everything which is dedicated to God, or which has to do with God, is a part of true godly fear, and cannot be neglected without injury to ourselves as well as offence to God.

“And am come down to deliver them.” This is God speaking after the manner of men. He does not leave His exalted place, but He acts as if He did. “The descent of God,” says St. Augustine, “signifies anything which is done upon earth beyond the accustomed course of nature. God is then said to descend, not as if He transferred Himself from a higher place to a lower, since He is omnipresent. But it is said, *anthropopathôs*, after the manner of men, when anything very remarkable, much out of the usual order of things, is done upon earth, especially in the matter of taking vengeance on the impious, and protecting the godly. Thus here He comes down to liberate the Hebrews from the tyranny of Pharaoh. So God is said to have come down to see the city and the tower which men had built (Gen. xi. 5); and to have come down to see if Sodom was as wicked as He had heard (Gen. xviii. 21). He descended on Mount Sinai, when on it He gave the law to Moses and his people.” (Cornelius à Lapide.)

35, 36. “This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made



35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer <sup>p</sup> by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

<sup>p</sup> Exod. xiv. 19. Numb. xx. 16.

<sup>q</sup> Exod. xii. 41. & xxxiii. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Exod. vii. & viii. & ix. & x. & xi. & xiv. Ps. cv. 27.

<sup>s</sup> Exod. xiv. 21, 27, 28, 29.

<sup>t</sup> Exod. xvi. 1, 35.

<sup>u</sup> Deut. xviii. 15, 18. ch. iii. 22.

<sup>v</sup> Or, as myself.

<sup>w</sup> Matt. xvii. 5.

36 <sup>a</sup> He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, <sup>a</sup> and in the Red sea, <sup>a</sup> and in the wilderness forty years.

37 ¶ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, || like unto me; <sup>x</sup> him shall ye hear.

36. "He brought them out." Rather, "this man brought them out."

37. "Shall the Lord your God." C., E., P., H., most Cursives, &c., read, "the Lord" before "God;" but N, A., B., D., some Cursives, Vulg., Sab., Copt., Syriac, omit "the Lord your," and read, "A prophet shall God raise," &c.

"Him shall ye hear" omitted by N, A., B., H., P.; retained by C., D., E., most Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, &c.

thee . . . forty years." This is one of the salient parts of this discourse, in which the speaker reiterates his main point. If the fathers refused Moses, why should not the children, who had the same unregenerate nature, refuse the Greater than Moses? That the people of the Jews should reject a deliverer accredited by wonders and signs, was no new thing.

37. "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall," &c. This place, it is to be carefully remembered, is not cited by Stephen as any other prophecy of the Messiah by Isaiah or Jeremiah might be cited: but as the witness of Moses himself that his dispensation was not a final one. If Moses had taught the children of Israel all that God intended them to know respecting the way of access to Himself, then there would have been no need of another prophet like unto Moses, for, as I have shown, Moses was absolutely unique among the prophets of the Old Covenant in this respect, that he inaugurated a way of access to God. Isaiah, for instance, prophesied far more distinctly respecting the Divine Nature and atoning work of the Messiah than did Moses; but then Isaiah himself was under the dispensation of Moses, and

38 <sup>7</sup> This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with <sup>7</sup> the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: <sup>a</sup> who received the lively <sup>b</sup> oracles to give unto us:

<sup>7</sup> Exod. xix. 3, 17.

<sup>a</sup> Is. lxviii. 9.

Gal. iii. 19.

Heb. ii. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xxi. 1.

Deut. v. 27, 31.

& xxxiii. 4.

John i. 17.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. iii. 2.

38. "The church." Perhaps it should be rendered "congregation," to distinguish it from the mystical Body.

"Lively oracles." "Living oracles" (Revisers).

had access to God through that tabernacle or temple service which God ordained by Moses: whereas Christ was like to Moses in that He inaugurated a new dispensation, "a new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh," which new way superseded the old way of Moses, and all the people of God have since His Sacrifice come to God through Him, as the second Moses, the Greater than Moses, the true and all-sufficient Mediator.

38. "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which," &c. By the use of the word "church" in this passage, St. Stephen is supposed by some to assert the oneness of the Jewish and the Christian Church; but this must be received with great caution, for if the two be altogether the same, why should the Apostles require the members of the elder Church to be baptized into the younger? Of course, all the people of God in all ages are one, as being the people of God; but if we assert this, we must do so bearing in mind the enormous difference made by Christ in the relations of the people of God to God. The great distinctive feature of the Christian Church is its being one mystical body under one Head, Jesus Christ, Who became capable of being the mystical Head of such a body only by His Incarnation, and now the union is such that it can be said of us that we are members of His Body, bone of His Bone, and flesh of His Flesh (Ephes. v. 20). Surely this could not be said of the Jewish body before the Incarnation, or rather before Pentecost.

"With the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers." Here, instead of speaking blasphemous words against Moses, he speaks of him in terms which could be used of no other being except Christ, for he makes Moses to be the mediator between the Angel which spake to him, i. e., the Angel of the

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

<sup>c</sup> Ex. xxxiii. 1. 40 <sup>e</sup> Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

<sup>d</sup> Deut. ix. 16. 41 <sup>d</sup> And they made a calf in those days, and <sup>e</sup> offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

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presence, and "our fathers." He was with the Angel and with the fathers; and still further, from the hands of the Angel he received "the lively oracles to give unto us." Here seems an allusion to Deut. v. 27, where the people said to Moses, "Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee," and the Lord accepted their prayer, and even commended them for it, and said to Moses, "As for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments and the statutes, and the judgments which thou shalt teach them."

39, 40, 41. "To whom our fathers would not obey . . . own hands." Notwithstanding that they had asked him to mediate between them and God, they rejected him when they said, "make us gods," and when they made a calf and worshipped it as the symbol of the God Who had brought them out of Egypt.

No doubt this was the god Apis, with whose worship they had been familiar; their sin apparently was not that they intended to worship another God, but that they intended to worship the true God under the form of a brute creature. So also Jeroboam and Jehu, who were zealous for God against Baal, but retained the worship of God under this degrading form.

The inference which St. Stephen no doubt intended them to draw from this was that if the fathers rejected a mediator so might the children. The fathers rejected God and Moses because in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt; the sons would reject the greater Mediator because in their hearts they turned back to sin and covetousness and turned away from a Messiah Who would make them free from sin and the true servants and sons of God.

42 Then \*God turned, and gave them up to worship 'the host of heaven ; as it is written in the book of the prophets, \*O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space of forty years in the wilderness?*

\* Ps. lxxxii. 12.  
Ezek. xi. 25,  
39. Rom. i.  
24. 2 Thess.  
ii. 11.  
† Deut. iv. 10.  
& xvii. 3.  
2 Kings xvii.  
16. & xxi. 3.  
Jer. xix. 13.  
‡ Amos v. 25,  
26.

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which

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42. "Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven ; as it is written," &c. It is probable that the idolatry of all Palestine and the adjoining countries was originally Sabaism, or a worship of the host of heaven. The only instance that we read of in the books of Moses of the Israelites openly committing idolatry of this sort is in Numbers xxv. 3 : "And Israel joined himself unto Baal Peor," Baal being most probably originally the sun god ; though some Hebraists, as Gesenius, suppose him to be rather the planet Jupiter ; and Ashtaroth, whose worship is so closely connected with that of Baal, being originally the moon or the star Venus or Lucifer. Moloch also has been generally understood to be the planet Saturn.

"Gave them up to worship the host of heaven," *i. e.*, in righteous anger He gave them up to themselves, and so they naturally took to the worship of the gods of the heathen in whose midst they dwelt. The worship of such gods was fascinating to men of impure and corrupt minds. Their sacred rites were occasions for all sorts of abominations. The idea seems to be, they themselves chose the worship of the bull Apis as representing the supreme God, but God Whose Name was thus dishonoured allowed them to fall into still greater depths of degradation in the worship of Baal, and Ashtaroth, and Moloch.

The quotation from Amos v. 25, 26, seems to refer not only to the sojourn in the wilderness, but to the whole of their career as a nation, and we should gather from it, as from other places, that, along with the public open worship of Jehovah in His tabernacle or temple there was always going along, side by side with it, the more or less secret adoration of these planet-gods.

"The star of your god Remphan." St. Stephen here quotes not

ye made to worship them : and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, || speaking unto Moses,  
Or, who spake.

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44. "Speaking unto Moses." "Who spake to Moses," margin and Revisers.

the Hebrew but the Septuagint. I give in a footnote some out of many attempts at reconciliation between the two texts.<sup>1</sup>

"I will carry you away beyond Babylon." The Hebrew and Septuagint both read "beyond Damascus." This may be an inaccuracy in the original defence of Stephen, in which case, as I have said more than once, his inspiration was only for spiritual purposes to give the spiritual application of the Old Testament, and not to preserve him from mere slips of memory. It may, however, have been an intentional correction of the statement of the prophet, for the Israelites were carried away beyond both Damascus and Babylon, when, as related in 2 Kings xvii. 6, they were placed in the cities of the Medes, so that the vengeance executed upon them was beyond that foretold.

44. "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness," &c. The words "witness" and "congregation" are exactly the same in the Hebrew (עֵדוּת). The "witness" is the same as the word "testimony" applied to the ark : and it is probable that as the ark was the ark of the testimony because of the tables of the law, the rod that budded, and the pot of manna which it

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<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew literally translated runs, "But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch, and Chiun your images, the star of your God, which ye made to yourselves." The Septuagint is, "Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, the images of them which ye made for yourselves." Gesenius supposes that Chiun, which is a word which only occurs in this place, signifies a statue or image, and would render the passage, "Ye bore the tabernacle of your king (Moloch), and the statue of your idols, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." So Vulgate, *Imaginem idolorum vestrorum*. According to this interpretation, the only one which the received vowels will admit, the name of the idol so worshipped by the Israelites is not given, and it can only be inferred from the mention of a star, that some planet is to be understood, which Jerome conjectures to have been Lucifer or Venus. The Syriac translator (*i. e.* of the passage on Amos) translates it as being Saturn. The Septuagint translators held Chiun to be the name of an idol which they corrupted into Raiphan or Rephan, and then into Remphan. It has been assumed, but cannot be shown, that Raiphan or Rephan was an Egyptian word denoting the planet Saturn. (Gesenius on Chiun).

<sup>h</sup> that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

45 <sup>1</sup> Which also our fathers || that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, <sup>k</sup> whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David ;

<sup>h</sup> Ex. xxv. 40.  
& xxvi. 30.

Heb. viii. 5.

<sup>1</sup> Josh. iii. 14.

|| Or, *having received.*

<sup>k</sup> Neh. ix. 24.

Ps. xlii. 2. &

lxxviii. 55.  
ch. xiii. 19.

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45. "Our fathers that came after." "Our fathers in their turn," Revisers. "Our fathers having received," margin.

"Jesus." "Joshua."

contained, so the tabernacle was similarly the tabernacle of the testimony because it contained this ark of the testimony.

"That he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen." It is probable that St. Stephen introduced the mention of the tabernacle here, because though in form only a movable tent, it was hallowed by associations which the temple had not. The plan of it was shown by God Himself to Moses, who was enjoined to make it exactly according to that plan. It is also expressly said that the ark in the temple contained only the tables of the law, not the rod of Aaron or the pot of manna (1 Kings viii. 9). The ark also was movable, betokening that the presence of God would be where the law of God, and the bread of God, and the ministry of God would be; so that notwithstanding all the outward grandeur of the temple, the tabernacle was a greater thing.

45. "Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus," &c. The tabernacle witnessing to the presence, and love, and goodness of God, existed before the Israelites obtained possession of the Land of Promise, and came with the Israelites into that land. All this implies that God's presence was not absolutely tied to one spot, as the Jews would have it.

"With Jesus." It has been noticed that this is the only place in this speech or defence in which the word Jesus is mentioned, and here it means not the antitype but the type. There is yet another place in the New Testament in which the name is applied to the son of Nun, viz., in Heb. iv. 8: "For if Jesus (or Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day." Is there not a mysterious connection between these two references to the first Jesus? Joshua gave rest,

46 <sup>1</sup> Who found favour before God, and <sup>m</sup> desired to find

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xvi. 1.  
<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 1.  
 Ps. lxxxix. 19.  
 ch. xiii. 22.

a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 <sup>n</sup> But Solomon built him an house.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Kings viii.  
 17. 1 Chron.  
 xxii. 7. Ps.  
 cxxxii. 4, 5.

48 Howbeit <sup>o</sup> the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

<sup>n</sup> 1 Kings vi.  
 1. & viii. 20.  
 1 Chron. xvii.  
 12. 2 Chron.  
 iii. 1.

46. "For the God of Jacob." So A., C., E., P., almost all Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm., Æth.; but "for the house of Jacob" in N, B., D., H.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings viii.  
 27. 2 Chron.  
 ii. 6. & vi. 18.  
 ch. xvii. 24.

48. "In temples." "In [things] made with hands" (*ἐν χειροποιήτοις*), N, A., B., C., D., E., 27, 29, 40, 61, 73, 163, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Æth.; but H., P., most Cursives, and Arm. read, "in temples" (*ναοῖς*).

but there remained a better and eternal rest: Joshua brought into Canaan an earthly tabernacle, but Christ is the high priest of a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (Heb. ix. 11).

Why is it said so particularly that this tabernacle was "brought into the possession of the Gentiles"? It seems to be because the tabernacle of witness was brought into a land which was at the time in possession of the Gentiles, though God, by little and little, drove them out before the children of Israel; and, if so, God may again remove the symbol and pledge of His presence into regions which the Jews would account unholy and unclean.

46, 47. "Who found favour with God, and desired to find a tabernacle . . . an house." It is generally supposed that the mention of the names of David and Solomon is made by Stephen in order to rebut the accusation that he had spoken blasphemous words against the Temple. The man who found favour with God desired to do what he was not permitted to do, because he had shed much blood. His son, emphatically the peaceful one, was to build the house. So that St. Stephen, instead of blaspheming against it, held the Temple in the highest honour, so honourable that the man after God's own heart was not worthy to do more than accumulate the materials for its erection.

48, 49, 50. "Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; . . . made all these things," &c. It is remarkable that the truth here declared by Isaiah was set forth by Solomon in the dedication prayer of this very Temple: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have

49 <sup>p</sup> Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what <sup>p</sup> is the place of my rest? p Is. lxxvi. 1, 2. Matt. v. 34, 35. & xxiii. 29.

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

51 ¶ Ye <sup>q</sup> stiffnecked and <sup>r</sup> uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. q Ex. xxxii. 9. & xxxiii. 3. Is. xlviii. 4. r Lev. xxvi. 41. Deut. x. 16. Jer. iv. 4. & vi. 10. & ix. 26. Ezek. xlv. 9.

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builted?" (1 Kings viii. 27). St. Paul, also, who no doubt heard this defence of Stephen, reiterates the same sentiment in his address to the Athenians: "God, that made the world and all that is therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (xvii. 24). It seems an axiom, not of true religion, but of common sense, that an omnipresent God cannot dwell in a temple as a man dwells in a house. No sensible Jew could believe such a thing; but what they believed was, that He had engaged always to confine what we call His peculiar Presence, *i. e.*, His greater nearness to hear prayer and accept sacrifice, to the Temple at Jerusalem; and the main teaching of St. Stephen's defence was to show that they were grievously mistaken in this. The sin of His worshippers might drive Him from their midst, for He once "forsook the tabernacle in Silo, even the tent that he had pitched among men." And it is said, with certainty of its truth, that on the eve of the destruction of the second Temple the angel of His Presence was heard to utter the words, "Let us depart hence."

51. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist," &c. As the language of the defence here turns to such bitter invective, it has been thought that at this point there was an interruption, and that they attempted to put him down by clamour, or even by violence. Certainly there must have been some determination expressed to hear no more; for it is not likely that St. Stephen would have ended such a review of God's dealings with Israel with denunciation. He must have intended to bring before them Jesus as the priest of the greater and more perfect tabernacle, the true way of access to God, and in His own Body the true temple of God—His Body the rent veil by which they might come by a new and living way into God's Presence; but they



- 52 \*Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of 'the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:
- \* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.  
Matt. xxi. 35.  
& xxiii. 34, 37.  
1 Thess. ii. 15.  
\* ch. iii. 14.

would hear no more, and so there was nothing left but to show them plainly how they were animated by their fathers' spirit, and trod in their fathers' footsteps.

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart." The first of these epithets was constantly applied to the people by God Himself and His prophets, betokening their resistance to the leading and guiding of God. Uncircumcised in heart is in Jeremiah ix. 26: "All the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart."

"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." This charge is also constantly brought by the prophets against Israel. Thus Isaiah lxiii. 10: "They rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit." His Spirit spake by the prophets, and in resisting their words they resisted the Holy Ghost; and the Lord warned them, in words of appalling solemnity, that they, the men of that generation, might resist Him to the extent of committing the unpardonable sin.

52. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" We are to remember that the Old Testament history is exceedingly fragmentary, or we should have many more instances of this persecution of the prophets. Thus Elijah prays: "The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword" (1 Kings xix. 10). Jeremiah also was persecuted, shut up in prison and in the pit. Isaiah is supposed to have been sawn asunder. "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16). These men proclaimed the coming of the Just One, *i. e.*, the Christ, and it was only following up their fathers' treatment of His precursors that when the Lord Himself came the Jews should betray and murder Him.

They betrayed Him because they consented to the act of Judas—they consented to the act of their priests in delivering (betraying) Him to Pilate. They murdered Him because they consented to the judicial murder perpetrated through the cowardice of Pilate.

53. "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels,

53 "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."

<sup>a</sup> Ex. xx. 1.  
Gal. iii. 19.  
Heb. ii. 2.

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53. "By the disposition of angels." See below.

and have not kept it." The Revisers translate, "Ye who have received the law as it was ordained by angels;" Wordsworth, "At the disposition or ordinance of angels," *i. e.*, ordained by God through them; Syriac, "You have received the law by the precept of angels."

Two or three direct statements of the New Testament teach us that in some way unknown to us the angels were employed in the giving of the law. Thus Gal. iii. 19: The law . . . "was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator;" and also Heb. ii. 2: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast." The presence of angels on Mount Sinai is recognized in Ps. lxxviii.: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place;" and also, though more obscurely, in Deut. xxxiii. 2: "He came with ten thousands of saints (or holy ones); from his right hand went a fiery law for them."

In what way the voice from Sinai which gave the law was the voice of God, and yet the same law was "ordained by angels," we know not; but evidently both St. Paul and St. Stephen considered that the giving through angels enhanced its obligation on the children of Israel, and yet was infinitely inferior to the declaration of the will of God in and through the Son, "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord." Perhaps if we had the whole of what Stephen said we should find that he drew the same comparison between the effects of neglecting the words of mere angels, and the words of the Eternal Son, as did the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

"And have not kept it." This is one of those many places which teach us the obligation of the whole law of God as set forth in the books of Moses till it was superseded by God Himself, not before, but *at* the destruction of the Temple. The Jews are never blamed for keeping the law to the letter, even though they did so in the spirit of bondage; always are they blamed for disobeying it—for making the holy law of none effect through their traditions. The law was to be their schoolmaster, their "pedagogue" to lead them to

54 ¶<sup>x</sup> When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

7 ch. vi. 5. 55 But he, <sup>y</sup> being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

Christ (Gal. iii. 24), but it could only lead those who followed it. I believe that it will be found at last that the vast bulk of those Jews who were brought to Christ were those who, like St. Paul, were "touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless."

54. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed," &c. We are to remember that the principal men among his judges, such as the chief priests, were personally implicated in the murder of Christ, and so they would consider such bold invective dangerous to their lives.

55. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost," "Being full," in the Greek *ὑπάρχων* not *γενόμενος*, and something more also than *ᾧν*. It shows his *antecedent* spiritual state, and is an assertion of the inspiration with which this speech was delivered (Bishop Wordsworth). So also Bishop Jacobson, in "Speaker's Commentary:" "The permanent character of St. Stephen's spiritual endowment is strongly marked by the use of *ὑπάρχων* instead of *ᾧν*." Perhaps it might be rendered literally but not euphoniously, "subsisting full of the Holy Ghost."

"Looked up stedfastly into heaven." It has been supposed by some that the trial took place in one of the Temple courts open above; but if, like St. John in Patmos, he was "in the Spirit," he would look up, and the heavens and their inhabitants would be seen by him even if he were in the darkest dungeon.

"And saw the glory of God." It is said of God that He "dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen nor can see." He saw the Shechinah, that cloud of inexpressible brightness which is the outward symbol of the immediate presence of the Eternal.

"And Jesus standing on the right hand of God." It is said that "he saw Jesus standing" and not sitting, as we confess in the Creed. This is well explained as if the Lord rose from His seat to show His first martyr the exceeding love and care He had for him, as if He stood up for his help and to nerve him with faith to endure what was coming. The president of this very court, probably

56 And said, Behold, <sup>a</sup> I see the heavens opened, and the <sup>a</sup> Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

<sup>z</sup> Ezek. i. 1.  
<sup>z</sup> Matt. iii. 16.  
ch. x. 11.

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

<sup>a</sup> Dan. vii. 13.

58 And <sup>b</sup> cast *him* out of the city, <sup>c</sup> and stoned

<sup>b</sup> 1 Kings xxi.  
13. Luke iv.  
29. Heb. xiii.  
12.  
<sup>c</sup> Lev. xxiv. 16.

Caiaphas, had heard the Lord say, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," but now His servant saw Him standing. Why this difference? Because *they* would see Him sitting in judgment upon them, but *he* saw Him standing to help him in death, and to receive his soul.

56. "And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man," &c. It has been noticed that this is the only place where the Lord is called by any of His servants "the Son of man." No doubt it is said with reference to what the Lord had said in their hearing, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power."

A question has been raised whether this appearance of the Lord to Stephen was objective or subjective, whether, that is, there was a real appearance of the Lord to the eyes of Stephen alone, or whether all took place within his brain. I think the narrative all tends to the former, particularly the words, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing." Why should not Christ appear as visibly to Stephen as He did to the Apostles? The first martyr seems to have been as worthy of such a favour as any man could well be.

57. "Then they cried with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran," &c. They cried out with a loud voice as in horror; they stopped their ears as they did when they heard blasphemy, they ran upon him. This appears to mean that the infuriated mob took the matter at once into their own hands. They anticipated the wishes of the chief priests and the elders; and braving the anger with which Pilate might regard so utterly illegal a proceeding, they seized on him.

58. "And cast him out of the city, and stoned him." "Cast him out of the city." As the Lord commanded that the blas-

him: and <sup>d</sup> the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

<sup>d</sup> Deut. xiii. 9.  
10. & xvii. 7.  
ch. viii. 1. &  
xxii. 20.

<sup>e</sup> ch. ix. 41.

<sup>f</sup> Ps. xxxi. 5.  
Luke xxiii. 46.

59 And they stoned Stephen, <sup>e</sup> calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, <sup>f</sup> receive my spirit.

phemer of His Name should be treated, "Bring forth him that has cursed without the camp, and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him" (Levit. xxiv. 14). So Naboth, who had been falsely condemned for blasphemy, was carried out of Jezreel.

"And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name," &c. The law of Moses (Deut. xvii. 6, 7) required two witnesses at least, whose hands should be first upon the guilty person to put him to death.

"At a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." This is the first time the name of the great Apostle is mentioned. He alludes to this fact of his having been accessory to the murder of Stephen in one of his prayers to that very Christ for Whose sake, and because he had confessed to seeing Him at the right hand of God, Stephen suffered: "When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him" (xxii. 20).

59. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The first martyr died invoking Christ as God. No prayer more worthy of Deity, or more unfitting to be addressed to a creature, can be conceived than this prayer of his, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." It is the same as that which David addresses to God, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Psalm xxxi.) It is the same as that of the Lord Himself, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

It seems a great mistake inserting the word "God" in italics, because it seems to obscure the fact that the Second Person of the Trinity was the One invoked. It should rather be "the Lord," "calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." It is a fulfilment of the Lord's word that "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." We commit our spirits to God because He is the God of the spirits of all flesh, and if we can commit our souls to the Son of God, it is because He shares fully the Father's Godhead.

60 And he <sup>a</sup> kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, <sup>b</sup> Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

<sup>a</sup> ch. ix. 40. &  
xx. 36. & xxi. 5.  
<sup>b</sup> Matt. v. 44.  
Luke vi. 28.  
& xxiii. 34.

60. "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not," &c. Notwithstanding the stunning deadly anguish of the blows of stone upon stone, he knelt down, that he might with more humble and earnest devotion commend to God the souls of his persecutors, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." His prayer was answered indeed, for the bitterest amongst them shortly became the most fervent champion of the Cross.

## CHAP. VIII.

AND <sup>a</sup> Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and <sup>b</sup> they

A. D. 34.  
<sup>a</sup> ch. vii. 58.  
& xxii. 20.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. xi. 19.

1. "There was." "There arose" (Revisers).

1. "And Saul was consenting unto his death," &c. It has been remarked that this word "consenting" is the same word used in St. Paul's prayer or confession to Christ in Acts xxii. 20: "When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death." "Consenting" is too weak a word: it means rather "being well pleased with."

"And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which," &c. How is it that the populace, which but a short time ago seemed to be on their side, permitted this persecution? Are we not expressly told that the emissaries of the high priests apprehended the Apostles "without violence, for they feared the people"? We are to remember that a small part of the population of any city may make a great show in the streets, whilst all the time the vast majority are against them, but, not being excited, do not appear; whereas now the whole evil heart of the wicked city was stirred

were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made

great lamentation over him.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. xxiii. 2.  
& 1. 10. 2 Sam.  
iii. 31.

against men who brought their sin and hypocrisy so close home to them.

"And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria," &c. There are traditions that this dispersion extended to remote regions, as even to Spain and Gaul; but it is not probable that the persecuted took refuge beyond the two regions here mentioned, or we should have had some notice of so important a step in the evangelization of the world.

"Except the apostles." There was a tradition that the Lord commanded the Apostles not to depart from Jerusalem until twelve years were accomplished, in order that every one in Jerusalem might hear the call to repentance and faith in Christ. This is mentioned by Eusebius, book v., ch. xviii.: "He (Apollonius) mentions also that our Saviour commanded His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem for twelve years." The same is also given in Clement of Alexandria, "Miscellanies," vi., 5, as a saying of St. Peter's.

2. "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." These devout men, because the word "devout" is applied to the Hellenists in Acts ii., 5, are supposed by many commentators not to have been Christians but Jews who, though devout and tolerant, had not yet made up their minds respecting the mission of Jesus. But I think this is extremely unlikely. Is it possible to suppose that if any Christians remained in Jerusalem they would have left the funeral obsequies of Stephen to be performed by unbelievers? or would these devout men have made great lamentation over one, of the truth of whose teaching they entertained grave doubts? The cases of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea are cited, but both these men were believers when they buried the Lord. They may not have been prominent men in the Church, but none but believers would then have undertaken the office.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It may be well to give the tradition respecting Gamaliel, then supposed to be a secret believer, from Lucian, to whom I have before alluded: "Horum dux fuit Gamaliel; nam

3 As for Saul, <sup>d</sup> he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison.

<sup>d</sup> ch. vii. 58.  
& ix. 1, 13, 21.  
& xxii. 4. &  
xxvi. 10, 11.  
1 Cor. xv. 9.  
Gal. i. 13.  
Phil. iii. 6.  
1 Tim. i. 13.  
<sup>e</sup> Matt. x. 23.  
ch. xi. 19.

4 Therefore <sup>e</sup> they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

3. "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house," &c. "He made havock." The word *λυμαίνω* is frequently applied to savage beasts destroying the sheep and ravaging the fruits of the earth, so Psalm lxxx. 13, in Septuagint, "the wild boar out of the wood doth waste it."

A fanciful but very striking comparison is made by the Fathers and mystical writers between Saul persecuting the Christians and Jacob's prophecy respecting Benjamin: "Benjamin shall raven as a wolf, in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." The tribe produced but two great men, both of the same name; but the latter far eclipsed the former, and made a mark in the world, second only to that of his Master; but he, Saul, was in his youth a ravager, the wolf of the fold, and in his mature age the builder up of the Church—dividing the Gentiles as spoil for Christ. The manner of his ravaging he himself describes in xxvi. 10: "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I persecuted them oft in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them I persecuted them, even unto strange cities."

4. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." "Went everywhere," *i. e.*, to all places in the Holy Land, Judæa, Samaria, and probably Galilee.

"Preaching the word." This does not mean, of course, that they formally taught the Church, but that they proclaimed as best they could the word of Christ to the unbelievers amongst whom

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ut ipse revelavit Luciano, qui id ipsum scribit in invent. S. Stephani, Judæi corpus Stephani abjecerunt in agrum, ut a feris et volucris voraretur; quo circa per diem et noctem ibi mansit insepultum, et a feris avibusque Dei autu intactum; sed Gamaliel nocte sequenti misit viros fideles et religiosos, qui illud ad villam suam deferrent, que ex nomine suo dicebatur Caphargamala viginti passuum millibus distans a Jerusalem, ibique eum posuit in monumento novo, faciens ei plautum 70 diebus."



5 Then 'Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and  
 'ob. vi. 5. preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

8 Mark xvi. 17. 7 For 8 unclean spirits, crying with loud voice,

5. "The city of Samaria." So N, A., B., 31, 40. "A city," C., D., E., H., P., most Cursives.

7. The first part of this verse is evidently broken and corrupt. Tischendorf reads, "For many of those who had unclean spirits, (the unclean spirits) crying out with a loud voice came out." The Revisers read, "For *from* many of those which had unclean spirits, they came out crying with a loud voice."

they sojourned. This was natural; having received so inestimable a benefit as the knowledge of Christ, how could they keep silence? We ought to have far more of such lay preaching of Christ; but they who preach should fear exceedingly lest their preaching, instead of adding to the Church, divide the body for whose unity Christ so earnestly prayed just before His crucifixion (John xvii. 21).

5. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." Philip, not the Apostle, but the Deacon, afterwards called the Evangelist in xxi. 8. "A city of Samaria;" the more important MSS. N, A., B., read "the city." If we read "a city," we would fain believe that it was Sychar, the city in which the way had been prepared by Christ Himself. If "the city," then it was the capital city, occupying the site of the Shomeroon which Omri built, afterwards the city of Ahab, who sold himself to do evil. It had been razed to the ground by Shalmaneser, but rebuilt with great splendour by Herod, who called it Sebaste, after the name of Augustus (Sebastos).

6. "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things," &c. Their willingness to receive the preaching of Christ by the mouth of Philip seems to indicate that they had had some preparation, which is in favour of the city being Sychar, where the Lord broke up the fallow ground. Still as Sychar was but a few miles distant from Sebaste, they of the latter city may have learnt much about the Lord from those who dwelt there.

7. "For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice." Most probably in their rage at being cast out of their victims (Mark i. 26).

came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before-time in the same city <sup>h</sup> used sorcery, and bewitched <sup>a</sup> ch. xiii. 6. the people of Samaria, <sup>1</sup> giving out that himself <sup>1</sup> ch. v. 36. was some great one:

8. "And there was great joy in that city." Great joy, because they felt that the Redeemer, He Who could deliver their souls from the guilt and slavery of sin, and in His own time their bodies from all disease, and even death, was come with power into their midst.

9. "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before-time," &c. The short notice of this man in the New Testament bears no proportion to the place he holds in the earliest ecclesiastical history. In the Acts he figures as a mere impostor, in the same rank as Elymas or Barjesus, and the sons of Sceva; but in the history of the early Church he appears as the father of heresy, or at least of those particular kinds of heresy which were formed by mixing some features of Christianity with Magianism or Gnosticism. I shall give in a note at the end of this chapter the account of him by three reliable writers of the second or early part of the third century, viz., Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Hippolytus, and now strictly confine myself to the little that is said of him in the text.

"Used sorcery." What was this sorcery or magic? Was it founded upon real intercourse with evil spirits, who enabled those who had sold themselves to them to do something beyond the power of ordinary mortals, or was it simply imposture? No doubt the Lord treats it as a possible thing that men by the power of Beelzebub might cast out devils; no doubt, all through Scripture magic or witchcraft is treated as if it were a crime, having as its basis some intercourse with the powers of evil. But in the case of Simon nothing is said of miracles which he actually worked. All that is said of his powers is consistent with the fact that he used jugglery and incantations, which acted on the imaginations of those who beheld them, so that they believed that spirits were pre-

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

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10. "This man is the great power of God." So K., L., P., most Cursives, Sah., Syriac; but N, A., B., C., D., E., several Cursives (13, 27, 28, 40, 61, 66, 96, &c.), Vulg., Copt., Arm., read, "the power of God which is called great."

sent.<sup>1</sup> And that Simon did nothing which could properly be called a miracle is evident from the wonder with which he regarded the real miracles performed by Philip, and by his offering to the Apostles money if they would endue him with something of the same power.

The word rendered "bewitched," it is to be remembered, implies nothing real, but simply "astonishment." It is the same word employed in Luke xxiv. 22, where it is said that "certain women of our company made us astonished."

"Giving out that himself was some great one."

10. "To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest . . . the great power of God." We are not to judge too harshly of their credulity. We must remember that the Samaritans, as well as the Jews, were then looking for the Messiah; indeed we should gather from the words of the woman of Samaria (John iv.) that they believed His coming was close at hand. Expecting Him, they were the more readily taken in by the pretensions of one who dealt in lying wonders, and gave himself out to be that power of God which was called "the great one." A passage from Irenæus explains very clearly this particular pretension of Simon's: "This man then was glorified by many as if he were a god; and he taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son, but descended in Samaria as the Father, while he came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit. He represented himself, in a word, as being the loftiest of all powers, that is, the Being Who is the Father over all, and he allowed himself to be called by whatsoever title men were pleased to address to him" (Irenæus against Heresies, I. xxiii.).

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<sup>1</sup> If the reader desires he will see a very detailed account of ancient incantations, and the mode in which answers were given to questions proposed, in the "Refutation of all Heresies," by Hippolytus, book iv., ch. xxviii., pp. 93-100, in the first volume of the translation of his works in Clark's Ante-Nicene Library.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things \* concerning the kingdom of God, and the name \* ch. i. 3. of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was

12. "Preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God." So H., L., P., and most Curatives; but N., A., B., C., D., E., 34, 36, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, &c., read, "evangelizing concerning the kingdom of God."

11, 12. "And to him they had regard . . . baptized, both men and women." From this we gather that they were struck with the reality and benevolent character of the miracles performed by Philip, so different from the empty charlatanism by which they had been led, and embraced the doctrines which Philip preached.

"The things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ." Notice how Philip preached, not a mere doctrinal system, but a kingdom—that kingdom, the entrance into which is by being born again of water and of the Spirit; and so, when this kingdom was preached, they entered into it by their baptism, which is so expressly mentioned.

"The name of Jesus." That is, the person of Jesus, God and man, in which Name alone they could receive grace and salvation.

13. "Then Simon himself believed also," &c. What was this belief which Simon exercised? It is pronounced by some to be a feigned, unreal, hypocritical belief. Thus Cornelius à Lapide: "He believed feignedly, that is, he pretended that he believed, both lest he should be deserted by his own disciples believing in Philip, and also that he might receive the power of speaking in various languages, and performing miracles." But it is quite evident that Simon's faith embraced the supernatural nature of the system with which he was for the first time face to face. He must have believed the truth of Philip's mission, so far as this, that Philip's miracles were done by the power of God, in contrast with his, which were mere deceptions. This faith was the groundwork of all, and on it could be built all that superstructure of love and holiness which formed the character of the bulk of the members of the Pentecostal church at Jerusalem; but it came into a heart utterly unprepared by repentance and conviction of sin, and so it

baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding  
 † *Gr. signs and great miracles.* the † miracles and signs which were done.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John :

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bore no fruit. It was not hypocrisy, or Simon would not have said, "Give me this power," but it did not apprehend Christ as God had set Him forth as a Saviour from sin. It strongly apprehended the Lord's power over nature, but it did not in the least apprehend the Lord as the bestower of Divine grace.

"And when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered," &c. It has been asked, what benefit Simon received from his baptism? We answer, that he received either the pledge or the seed of such a benefit that he had no need to have his baptism repeated. By his baptism he was transferred into the kingdom of grace, a kingdom in which repentance is effectual to enable a man to receive all its blessings, and we shall see that Peter so spoke to him as to assure him that if he repented all would be forgiven.

"Wondered." The word is the same which in verse 9 is rendered "bewitched." The difficulty which he had in making his pretended miracles to appear real, made him watch with astonishment and envy the works done by Philip.

14. "Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem," &c. We now come to one of the most important of the "Acts" of the Holy Apostles, the mission of SS. Peter and John to lay hands on the Samaritan converts, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The first matter to be considered is, why is this incident mentioned at all? Evidently because the full reception of the Samaritans into the Church of Christ was the first evidence of its Catholicity. Hitherto the Church was shown to be one, "They that believed were of one heart and of one soul." Now it is shown to be universal; universal in the application of its principles, and the offers of its highest graces. For to the orthodox Jew, no living being was more hateful than the Samaritan. Both received, it is true, the Pentateuch, but in receiving it the Samaritan made null and void that which was in the eyes of the Jew its first revelation, that its promises belonged to one family, and its ritual to one spot.

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, 'that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For <sup>m</sup> as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only <sup>n</sup> they were baptized in <sup>o</sup> the name of the Lord Jesus.)

<sup>t</sup> ch. ii. 38.

<sup>m</sup> ch. xix. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. xxviii.

19. ch. ii. 38.

<sup>o</sup> ch. x. 48. &

xix. 5.

So that the reception of the Samaritan to full Church membership, was an enormous stride in the direction of the subjugation of all men to the obedience of faith. But on the part of the Apostles there was apparently not the smallest hesitation. They had been prepared by the action of the Lord Himself to look upon the Samaritan, if he believed, as designed by the Lord to be brought into His fold, and at once they acted accordingly. The whole college or body sent the two foremost among them, Peter and John, to inaugurate the new point of departure by communicating to the baptized Samaritans the distinguishing grace of the dispensation.

15. "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost." All the outward ordinances of God, that is, all those which have an outward part as well as an inward grace, must be accompanied by prayer. We of the Church of England have been led by God to recognize and act upon this in our office for the administration of Baptism, our Eucharistic office, and in our Ordination and our Confirmation Services. Prayers expressing the profoundest devotion are the necessary accompaniments of these most holy rites. It seems not to have been so in the earlier dispensation, at least there were no specific directions respecting prayer at the celebration of such a rite as circumcision or the Passover.

16. "(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in," &c.) It is a matter for deep consideration how they could have been converted, how they could have been Christians at all, how they could have sincerely professed the Name of Christ, except by the power of the Holy Spirit acting on their hearts (1 Cor. xii.). Meyer seems to think that the gift of the Spirit was, in this case, reserved to the chief Apostles, because the "epoch-making advance of Christianity beyond the bounds of Judæa into Samaria was not to be accomplished without the intervention of the direct ministry of the Apostles. Therefore the Spirit was reserved until this Apostolic intervention occurred."

17 Then <sup>p</sup> laid they *their* hands on them, and they received  
the Holy Ghost.

p. ch. vi. 6. &  
ix. 6. Heb.  
vi. 2.

But do we not find the solution in 1 Cor. xii. 3? We are there told that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," and yet over and above this there are "the manifestations of the Spirit," the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith in the sense of faith to do mighty works, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues.

Now these we know, or the greater part of them, were gifts for the first times of Christianity. They ceased when the Church had got the ear of the world, and could compel it to listen to her, but at the first they were essential to her growth and progress. For the doctrine of the Church was not a higher morality, which commended itself by its own intrinsic excellence to the better class of minds. It was the doctrine of redemption from all spiritual and physical evil through the Crucifixion and Resurrection of an unknown Man, all whose followers, at the first, were unlearned and ignorant men. So that there must be some overwhelming evidence to show that the first preachers of the Gospel had a right to be listened to at all.

When, then, the Apostles sent two of their number to confer on these Samaritans the Holy Ghost through the laying on of their hands, they sent them to confer the gift of Him Who would manifest Himself according to the needs of the Church, and the Lord ratified what they had done by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And now what is the relation of this Apostolic rite to Confirmation as we practise it now? Evidently it is the same, if, that is, we understand Confirmation aright—if we do not take the lowest view of it that we possibly can, and believe it to be principally a renewal of our baptismal vow. If we understand by Confirmation "the laying on of hands" in order to convey to the baptized a gift of the Holy Spirit over and above that which they received at conversion or baptism, then we must believe that the Spirit so given manifests Himself according to the needs, not only of the individual confirmed, but of the Church. We should consequently believe not only that the Holy Spirit may be given to strengthen the baptized, that they may the more manfully and successfully

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

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18. "The Holy Ghost was given." So A., C., D., E., H., L., P., all Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Copt., Æth., Arm.; but N and B. read, "Spirit" only—"the Spirit was given."

fight each one his individual fight of faith against sin, the world, and the devil, but that they may receive gifts of wisdom, or of utterance suitable for the present times, and believing this we should pray accordingly. We should pray earnestly that God may give some gift of His Spirit to each one who is seeking Confirmation, to enable him to build up the Church in his particular sphere, to edify it not only by his example, but by his wisdom, his spiritual discernment, his readiness to speak words in season, as well as those higher gifts which may fit him, when he is old enough, to exercise higher ministries, such as the diaconate and priesthood. For years we have heard the complaint that there is a great deficiency in the number of candidates for the ministry, as measured by the needs of the population. Ought we not to begin our prayers earlier, and have in mind those who are presenting themselves each year to receive this imposition of the hands of the Bishops, that God may raise up among them a ministry abundant in numbers, as well as furnished with all needful grace? <sup>1</sup>

These four verses contain all the essentials of the doctrine of the laying on of hands :—

1. That it is administered only by the heads of the Church; for Philip, who was not an Apostle, apparently could not confer the Spirit.

2. That it is administered to the baptized.

3. That it is preceded by prayer.

4. And that in it no less a gift than the Spirit of God is given.

19, 20. "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands . . . he may receive the Holy Ghost." It is clear from this that the manifestations of the presence of the

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<sup>1</sup> It is a remarkable fact that, amongst all the prayers of the Church, there is not one for that for which the Lord specially bid us to pray, namely, that the Lord of the harvest would Himself send forth labourers into His harvest. The omission seems extraordinary and indeed unaccountable. There are excellent prayers for those who are already candidates, but none that God may raise up fitting men to be candidates.



19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

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Spirit were in outward gifts, such as healing, or speaking with tongues. If they had been only gifts of spiritual grace and holiness, Simon would not have discerned them, or would have held them in no account.

He offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands," &c. He seems to have had a clear faith (if such it can be called) in Christianity as a power far above this world—perhaps even from God—and yet not to have in the least degree realized its sanctifying power.

His sin in thus offering money for the power of imparting the Holy Spirit in His miraculous manifestations has been considered in all ages to have been the sin of Simony. He has been almost universally held to be the author and first committer of this sin, which has received from him its name.

The sin of Simony is thus described in Mr. Blunt's Annotated Bible:—"It consists in the sale or purchase of the power to confer spiritual gifts, and is a transgression of our Lord's commandment, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' (Matt. x. 8.) The extreme forms of this sin are—(1.) The sale or purchase of Holy Orders, so that a person is made a Bishop or a Priest in return for money paid by him to the Bishop ordaining him. (2.) The sale by, or purchase from, a Bishop, who alone can confer it, of a cure of souls, whether that of a Diocese or of a Parish. (3.) The sale or purchase of the sacraments. In all these cases the gift of God, that is, His grace, or the power to confer that grace, is made the subject of traffic, and such traffic has been strictly forbidden by the laws of the Church in every age, in obedience to the principle indicated by the words of our Lord and by His Apostle."

A very little consideration will make it clear that the sin committed by the seller or purchaser of the power of ordination is of a darker character than that committed by Simon Magus, for Simon apparently did not in the least degree realize the spiritual or sanctifying nature of the system to which he was to a great extent external—looking upon it as having some higher supernatural attributes than his own Gnostical or Magical system; whereas the purchaser of the power to confer Holy Orders or administer Sacraments is one brought up in the Holy System, who can only desire

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because <sup>a</sup> thou hast thought that <sup>r</sup> the gift of God may be purchased with money.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. x. 8.  
See 2 Kings  
v. 16.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

<sup>r</sup> ch. ii. 38. &  
x. 45. & xi. 17.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God,

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22. Pray God." So H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Syriac; but N., A., B., C., D., E., several Cursives, Sah., Copt., read, "Pray the Lord."

to purchase power in it, in order that he may use that power for the purposes of his covetousness or of his ambition.

20, 21. "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee . . . right in the sight of God." This is not a curse, but a very strong denunciation of the fearful state of this man's soul. It is, rendered quite literally, May thy money be with thee to destruction. Thou art already in a lost state (though as we shall see, not utterly lost). May thy money share it with thee. Keep it; we will have none of it. The words are not a whit stronger than those of St. Paul to Elymas, "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (xiii. 10).

We must remember that both St. Peter in the one case, and St. Paul in the other, declared to these sinners the true state of their souls—not to retain them in that state, but, through the influence of fear, to pull them out of it, as brands plucked from the burning.

We may take the latter part of the twentieth verse with the beginning of the twenty-first: "Because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." Such a thought could only find entrance into an unholy and covetous heart, which had no conception of the sin-destroying power of the Gospel.

This verse is one of the first axioms of the kingdom of God. They only have part or lot in salvation, or in the kingdom or Church of God, whose hearts are right with God. All the preaching of the word, all the means of grace, are ordained for this purpose, to put men right with God.

22, 23. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness . . . bond of iniquity." This verse, as I have hinted, answers, as far as is

\* if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven

• Dan. iv. 27. thee.

2 Tim. ii. 25.

• Heb. xii. 15.

23 For I perceive that thou art in 'the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

needful for us, the question respecting the faith of Simon Magus and the efficacy of his Baptism. His faith was such that the Apostle did not call upon him anew to believe, and his Baptism conveyed such a pledge or initial gift that he was not called upon to be baptized afresh. If so, his faith must have been such that repentance might spring from it, and be made efficacious by it. Indeed, if it is possible to conceive such a thing that a devil who believed and trembled could be saved, that devil would not have to believe with a new faculty or fix his faith on a new object, *i. e.*, on a new God. He must repent; he must approach the God before Whom he trembled in repentance.

And so with Baptism. Simon was not called to be rebaptized, but to make good his first Baptism by turning to God. By repentance that Baptism could be changed, so that instead of being a witness against him, it should become the pledge of salvation to him. Most of the difficulties which have divided Christians respecting Baptism would vanish if we but considered that Baptism can be received but once, so that if received in impenitence the beneficial effect is suspended till there is a better mind.

"If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." The thought of thine heart forgiven. So that from this we cannot but gather that sins well nigh unpardonable may be committed in the heart, and go no further. Well may the wise man say, "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Bitterness is a word used for the effects of sin; however sweet it is at the moment, it ends in sorrow and disappointment. The bond of iniquity is the slavery in which sin holds the soul.

The Revisers in their margin translate, "I see that thou wilt become a gall (or gall root) of bitterness and a bond of iniquity," alluding to the future career of Simon. The exact translation of the Greek is, "I see that thou art for (*εἰς*) a gall," &c., as if that was the direction he was then taking. So Lange, "that thou wilt prove to be a poison to the Church;" but this is doubtful.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

<sup>u</sup> Gen. xx. 7,  
17. Ex. viii. 8,  
Num. xxi. 7,  
1 Kings xiii. 8,  
Job xiii. 8,  
James v. 16.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

24. "Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye the Lord for me," &c. This would seem to be the beginning of a better hope, but all history teaches us that this beginning of repentance was but short-lived. Some suggest that he did not or would not pray for himself; others that he only desired the remission of the temporal penalty of his sin, and not a thorough change of heart.

25. "And they, when they had testified and preached the word . . . villages of the Samaritans." This probably means that they took many villages of the Samaritans on their way back, and preached in them; or it may mean that now that the hearts of the Samaritans were opened to the Gospel, they made short journeys from Jerusalem and kept up the work.

We know but one fact of importance respecting the Christian Church in Samaria, viz., that it gave birth to Justin Martyr, the first writer of any length in the early Church. In his pages we find the same Christianity, both doctrinal and practical, which the Church accepts now.

26. "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, . . . which is desert." This is another step in God's dealings in developing the catholicity of the Church. The angel of the Lord is sent to Philip with the message that he should at once leave the work in Samaria, and take a journey of at least fifty miles to the south-western corner of Judæa, passing Jerusalem and other populous cities on his left, and choosing an unfrequented route till he came near to the ancient city of Gaza. From what we can gather from the narrative, he was not told the reason why he should make this journey, which must have taken him three or four days.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, <sup>α</sup> a man of <sup>α</sup> Zeph. iii. 10. Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the <sup>γ</sup> John xii. 20. charge of all her treasure, and <sup>γ</sup> had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

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27, 28. "And he arose and went . . . Esaias the prophet." It was soon apparent why he was thus brought so far out of his way or work among the Samaritans. As he journeyed he overtook one, evidently a man of consequence, reading aloud as he rode in his chariot. This man was from the description of him the chief, or one of the chief ministers of the female ruler of Ethiopia, now Abyssinia. He was a proselyte to Judaism, no doubt circumcised, and a strict keeper of the law, in which he differed from Cornelius, who was admitted into the Church as a Gentile. He was reading Esaias the prophet, but in the Septuagint version, as the sequel shows. He had come up all the way from the upper valley of the Nile to Jerusalem to worship at one of the feasts, and so was one of the pious God-fearing men—the *ἀνδρες εὐλαβεῖς*—some of whom God had so signally honoured in the Pentecostal announcement of the Gospel. This man was an eunuch, and so in him was literally fulfilled other words of the same prophet: "Thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off" (chap. lvi. 4, 5).

29. "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." The agent who leads Philip is now changed. Before it was the angel of the Lord, now it is the Holy Ghost Himself. I perceive that scarcely any commentator makes any remark upon this change, and yet it is surely very worthy of notice. For throughout this Book of the Acts the interventions of the Spirit are of a very distinctly personal objective character, and by no means mere influences or inspirations.

30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet *Esaias*, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, \*He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and <sup>z</sup> *Is.* liii. 7, 8. like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

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“Join thyself to this chariot,” *i. e.*, lay hold of it, and so show that thou desirest to communicate something to him who rides in it.

30. “And Philip ran thither to him . . . Understandest thou what thou readest?” He very probably was much perplexed with what he was reading as to its meaning, for if any place requires an interpreter, human or divine (or should we not say human and divine together?) it is this place. For what could a Jew before the time of Christ make of it? Here is the account of One Whose death is expiatory, such as the death of no human being before His was imagined to be. Here is One Who dies a violent and unjust death, and yet after death He sees of the travail of His soul, He justifies many by His knowledge, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand.

31. “And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?” There is much in Scripture, as, for instance, the greater part of the moral precepts, which at once commends itself even to the unlearned understanding; but when we come to prophecy, to the comparison of spiritual things with spiritual, and the application of doctrine to daily life, then a guide is needful, and God has given to us this guide in the Church and her ministers. A man who says, “I need no guide, I am quite sufficient of myself; I assert the right of my private judgment,” takes certainly a very different view of his spiritual capacities and discernment from what this holy, truth-seeking man did. Which is likely to be right let the reader judge. If it be said that the Spirit is given to guide into all truth, so He is; but then in this case He was given not to the learner, but to the teacher. The Spirit did not Himself unveil the

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

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33. "In his humiliation." "His" omitted by N, A., B., Vulg.; retained by C., E., H., L., P., nearly all Cursives, Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm., &th.

meaning of the prophecy, but said to the human agent, the minister of the Church, "Go join thyself to this chariot."

32, 33. "The place of the scripture which he read was this . . . his life is taken from the earth." The first of these two verses, which are taken almost verbatim from the Septuagint, is sufficiently near to the Hebrew to require no comment; but it is otherwise with the second. The translation, "in his humiliation his judgment was taken away," seems to yield a clearer sense than the Hebrew, for it probably means, "in his humiliation (or such was his utter humiliation, that) his judgment—the judgment of righteousness to which He, no matter how lowly He was, was entitled—was taken away, for He was deprived of it.

"And who shall declare his generation?" The Hebrew and Septuagint are the same, and are alike difficult, because we know not what meaning can be certainly attached to the word "generation." The meaning is thus given by the Old Testament Revisers: "And as for his generation, who of them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living? for the transgression of my people was he stricken."

34. "And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh," &c. The eunuch answered, but Philip as yet had said nothing that could call forth this question. This teaches us that we have but a small fragment of the discourse.

"Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" What extraordinary lack of knowledge respecting the drift of the first in importance of all prophecies is shown in this question! <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is singular that Rationalists and unbelieving Jews are to this day unable to answer this question. Some say that "the servant of the Lord," whose sufferings are here fore-

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, <sup>a</sup> and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

<sup>a</sup> Luke xxiv. 27.  
ch. xviii. 28.

36 And as they went on *their way*, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is water*; <sup>b</sup> what doth hinder me to be <sup>b</sup> ch. x. 47. baptized?

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But would any one of the Apostles, before Pentecost, have given anything like a clear answer to it?

Under certain dogmatical prepossessions, a pious school amongst ourselves have pitched the knowledge of the Gospel, in the times before our Lord, far too high, so as, in fact, to anticipate such teaching as that which we have in the Pauline Epistles. But is this consistent with the most superficial knowledge of either the Old Testament or the New? If, for instance, St. Peter had understood that this prophecy referred to the Messiah, would he have taken our Lord aside and remonstrated with Him on what He had foretold respecting His approaching sufferings?

35, 36. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture . . . hinder me to be baptized?" It is clear from this that the preaching of Philip, which is here described as the preaching of Jesus, included, not only the Person of the Lord as the Son of God, and His Life, and teaching, and miracles, and atoning Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension, as the crown of all, but also that He had instituted a Church for the conveyance of His grace, and that the entrance into this Church was by the Sacrament of Baptism. For the eunuch had never heard before of Christian baptism, and would not have asked for it unless Philip had laid great stress upon its reception. We see then from this that the faithful preaching of Jesus includes the preaching of His Sacraments as means of union with Himself.

37. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart . . . Son of God." This verse seems to record what we should think

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told as atoning and sanctifying, was the whole people of Israel; some that it was only the godly remnant of the people; some say that it was Hezekiah; some that it was Jeremiah or "one of the prophets;" but of all the suggested interpretations, that which fixes it upon Jeremiah is the most ignorant and unreasonable, as the reader will see if he compares Isaiah liii. 7—"He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth"—with Jeremiah xi. 19, 20, and xx. 12-18.



37 And Philip said, ° If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, ¢ I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

° Matt. xxviii.  
10. Mark xvi.  
16.

¢ Matt. xvi.  
16. John vi.  
69. & ix. 35,  
39. & xi. 27.  
ch. ix. 20.  
1 John iv. 15.  
& v. 5, 13.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

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37. "And Philip said," &c. This whole verse omitted by N, A., B., C., H., L., P., 13, 61, above eighty Cursives, Vulg. (Cod. Amiat.), Syriac, Sah., Copt., Æth.: retained by E. and many Cursives.

necessary to have been asked and answered before the baptism could be ministered. There must have been some verbal confession of faith, or how could St. Peter have called it "The answer of a good conscience towards God"? (1 Peter iii. 21). And no confession could well be simpler, or expressed in fewer words than this. And yet, as the reader will see by the critical note above, the preponderance of authority of MSS. and versions is very strong indeed against it. And yet two fathers of the Church, one Irenæus, at the end of the second century, another, Cyprian, early in the third, quote it as part of the Sacred Text. I do not think that it can be an interpolation, or it would have been much less simple. The scribe would have interpolated much more. My conviction is that though it might not have been in the original draft of St. Luke's manuscript, from which the earliest copies were taken, it was added afterwards by his own hand. There are a considerable number of disputed passages, the doubtfulness of which is thus readily accounted for.

38. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still . . . he baptized him." It has been made a question whether Philip baptized him by immersion. It is very probable that in a country scantily supplied with water the candidate stood in the water where it was deepest, and very probably in most cases it did not come up to his knees, and the baptizer poured the water over him, as is represented in innumerable ancient pictures of our Lord's Baptism. In an ancient treatise, most probably written for the use of Palestinian Christians, in the latter part or even middle of the first century, viz., "The teaching of the Twelve Apostles," we read: "Baptize thus. After having recited all that has preceded, baptize

39 And when they were come up out of the water, ° the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

° 1 Kings xviii.  
12. 2 Kings  
ii. 16. Ezek.  
iii. 12, 14.

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in living water, and if thou hast not living water, *i.e.*, water issuing from a spring, or in a river, baptize in other water; and if thou canst not in cold water, then in warm; but if thou hast neither, pour water upon the head thrice, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

39. "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord," &c. This seems to have been after the manner of the Spirit's action upon Ezekiel as described in Ezek. iii. 14, "So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away." It certainly implies far more than an internal impulse of the Spirit to leave the place.

The words which follow, "that the eunuch saw him no more," seem to imply that the disappearance of Philip was sudden and instantaneous, so that there was no time for taking leave.

"He went on his way rejoicing." The light which had dispersed the comparative darkness of his soul, the insight which he had received into the meaning of the first and foremost of God's prophecies, and the assurance to him through his Baptism that he had part and lot in all this, naturally made him rejoice. Both in Cyril of Jerusalem and in Irenæus, he is said to have been the Evangelist of his countrymen, and, indeed, it is only probable that it should have been so, for he was not likely to keep the news of such a salvation to himself.

40. "But Philip was found at Azotus." This expression seems quite in harmony with the supernatural nature of his removal. If he had journeyed in the usual way, it is not at all likely that it would be said that he "was found" at Azotus.

"Azotus." The ancient Ashdod.

"Passing through." Probably, passing through the coasts.

"He preached in all the cities," *i.e.*, in Nicopolis, Lydda, Joppa,

till he reached Cæsarea. We afterwards (Acts xxi. 8) find him settled there.

#### NOTE.

The following are the accounts of Simon Magus and his heresy in Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Hippolytus.

Justin Martyr: "There was a Samaritan, Simon, a native of the village called Gitto, who in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, and in your royal city of Rome, did mighty acts of magic, by virtue of the art of the devils operating in him. He was considered a god, and as a god was honoured by you with a statue, which statue was erected on the river Tiber, between the two bridges, and bore this inscription in the language of Rome: 'Simoni Deo Sancto.' And almost all the Samaritans, and a few even of other nations, worship him, and acknowledge him as the first god; and a woman, Helena, who went about with him at that time, and had formerly been a prostitute, they say is the first idea generated by him. And a man Menander, also a Samaritan, of the town Capparetæa, a disciple of Simon, and inspired by devils, we know to have deceived many while he was in Antioch, by his magical art."—"Apology," i. 26, from translation by Dods in Clark's Ante-Nicene Christian Library. A note respecting the statue runs thus: "It is very generally supposed that Justin was mistaken in understanding this to have been a statue erected to Simon Magus, for in the year 1574 there was dug up in the island of the Tiber a fragment of marble with the inscription, 'Semoni Sancto Deo,' &c., being probably the base of a statue erected to the Sabine Deity, Semo Sancus." But Dr. Burton supposes that there is much probability that Justin is right.

Irenæus, "Against Heresies," book i., ch. xxiii., gives the account almost verbatim which we have in the Acts of the Apostles, but he goes on to tell us that Simon, "not putting faith in God a whit the more [for his reproof by St. Peter], set himself eagerly to contend against the Apostles, in order that he might seem a wonderful being, and applied himself with still greater zeal to the study of the whole magic art." Irenæus then proceeds to enlarge upon the account of Justin respecting Helena. "Having redeemed from slavery at Tyre a certain woman named Helena, he was in the habit of carrying her about with him, declaring that this woman was the first conception of his mind, the mother of all, by whom, in the beginning, he conceived in his mind (the thought) of forming angels and archangels. For this Ennæa, leaping forth from him, and comprehending the will of her father, descended to the lower regions, and generated angels and powers, by whom also he declared this world was formed," with much more, equally ridiculous and blasphemous.

Hippolytus gives in substance the outline of the same account, adding, however, a notice of the death of Simon. He had declared that he could not die, and stated that if buried alive he would rise the third day. And accordingly, having ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, he directed himself to be interred there. They then executed the injunction given; whereas he remained in that grave until this day, for he was not the Christ." ("Refutation of all Heresies," vi., chap. xv.)

## CHAP. IX.

AND <sup>a</sup>Saul, yet breathing out threatenings

A. D. 35.  
 ■ ch. viii. 3.  
 Gal. i. 13.  
 1 Tim. i. 13.

1. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples," &c. "Saul." What is known of the previous history of Saul we have from his own lips, or his own pen, and it is very scanty. He tells us that he was "a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia": and so he was "a citizen of no mean city." Tarsus was "no mean city" in point of learning and intellect. It is said by Strabo to rank even above Athens and Alexandria in respect of Philosophy and general education.

He also writes (Phil. iii. 5) that he had been "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews." He did not, however, finish his education in Tarsus, but was sent to complete it in Jerusalem. "Brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God as ye all are this day" (Acts xxii. 3). Thus educated he became a Pharisee. "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee" (xxvi. 5), and if we may so say, a Pharisee of the Pharisees; for he writes: "I profited in the Jews' religion above many mine equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. i. 14).

That his ultra-Judaism did not make him forget, or be indifferent to, the Greek culture which he had received in the schools of Tarsus, is evident from this, that when occasion required, he freely quoted the Greek Poets, *e. g.*, Aratus, in Acts xvii. 28: "For we are also his offspring." Menander, in 1 Cor. xv. 33: "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Epimenides, in Titus i. 12: "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies."

Now considering that we have only the scantiest fragments of his sermons or addresses to the heathen, it is probable that he rarely spoke to them without quoting against their idolatries some saying or other of their poets or philosophers.

He was, then, for his time, a Jew of rare culture and acquire-

and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.

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ments; for the Gentiles regarded with contempt Jewish learning, and the Rabbinical Jews looked upon the knowledge of Greek literature as something defiling as well as dangerous.

But neither of these literatures with which he was acquainted disposed him in the least degree to favour the pure and sublime religion of Jesus. His Greek culture in no way led him to favour the liberal views of his master Gamaliel. On the contrary, there seems to have been something in the teaching of Jesus which energetically repelled him, so that he became the fierce hater, the unrelenting persecutor, we may even say, the inquisitor of all who named the Name of Christ. He is ever forward in confessing this. "I persecuted this way unto the death, binding, and delivering into prison both men and women" (xxii. 4). "I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (xxvi. 11). This wicked work he was pursuing when the event took place which we are now about to consider—an event which, in its effect upon the fortunes of the Church, and the world, has been pronounced, and I think rightly, as second only to the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Lord.

"Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples," &c.

"Yet." Here we have to fall back upon the last notice of him in chap. viii.: "As for Saul, he made havock of the church," &c.

"Breathing out threatenings and slaughter." "Out of threatening and murder, breathing hard at the disciples, whereby is set forth the passionateness with which he was eager to terrify the Christians by threats, and to hurry them to death." So Meyer, who considers that, "the genitives ἀπειλήs and φόβου denote whence this breathing issued, *i. e.*, threatening and murder, *i. e.*, sanguinary desire was within him which excited and sustained his breathing hard."

"Went unto the high priest." So that instead of waiting the high priest's call, he urged him to severer measures, that the persecution might be carried beyond the bounds of Judæa. This high priest was probably Annas, Caiaphas having been deposed A.D. 36. The high priest's letters for the searching out and punishment of heretics would be acted upon in all the synagogues in the Roman

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any † of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

† Gr. of the way: 80 ch. xix. 9, 23.

3 And <sup>b</sup> as he journeyed, he came near Damas-

b ch. xxiii. 8. & xxvi. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 8.

dominion, as it was considered politic to uphold their authority in return for the subservience of Annas and his family to the Emperor. Annas was regarded by the Jews as, during his lifetime, the real high priest.

2. "And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way," &c. Damascus is the oldest city in the world. Its fame begins with the earliest patriarchs, and continues to modern times. While other cities of the East have risen and decayed Damascus is still what it was. It was founded before Baalbek and Palmyra, and it has outlived them both; while Babylon is a heap in the desert, and Tyre a ruin on the shore, it remains what it is called in the prophecies of Issiah, "the head of Syria" (Conybeare and Howson).

"To the synagogues." There was a very large number of Jews in Damascus. According to Josephus so many that Nero caused no less than 10,000 of them to be put to death.

"Any of this way." Rather *the way*—"I persecuted this way unto the death." It was in Saul's eyes *then*, the way of the Nazarenes. In a very short time it would be to him the way of life—the way of heaven—the way to God.

"Unto Jerusalem." As the rulers of the synagogues in other towns would not have power of life and death as the Sanhedrin had by Roman connivance.

3. "And as he journeyed he came near Damascus." The place where he was struck to the earth is variously identified by travellers, by some as ten miles, by some as two, and by some as a very short walk from the city.<sup>1</sup>

3, 4. "And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" We are here on

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find a full discussion of the evidences for these sites in Lewin's "Life of St. Paul," 4th edition, p. 49.

cus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven :

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ground so holy that it seems presumptuous to give what follows in any other words than his own, which shall be those to King Agrippa (xxvi.), and to the Jews (xxii.) "As I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me."

If the three narratives are honest accounts, putting their inspiration entirely out of the question, then the Lord Himself here appeared unto Saul, not in a vision, but as He will be seen of all men at the last day. The appearance was external, or as we say, "objective." Great pains seem to be taken to assure us that the Lord, instead of appearing in a vision, or dream, or cerebration, rent the veil which separates the seen from the unseen, and was seen of St. Paul in His risen Body, just as He was seen of Mary Magdalene, of the ten, and afterwards of the eleven, of the two on the way to Emmaus, of the five hundred brethren, and of the Apostles on the Mount of Ascension. In 1 Cor. xv. the Apostle himself recounts several outward and objective appearances of the Lord—that to Cephas, that to the twelve and others; and he concludes with the appearance to himself, "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Here he evidently classes the phenomenon amongst those which are contained in the last chapters of the Gospels—of course with this difference, that when the Lord appeared to Peter and the rest before His Ascension, He appeared in His usual form, whereas when He was seen of Saul, it was after His Ascension and consequent Glorification, and so was in unendurable brightness. As he looked up for a moment to heaven, he saw the form of the Lord in the midst of the brightness, just as when we look up to the noonday sun we discern for a moment the round orb. Thus, Ananias says to him, "The Lord,

even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way that thou camest" (verse 17). Then we read that "Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way" (27). Again, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldest see that Just One" (xxii. 14). Again, he himself asks, "Have I not seen the Lord?" This he asks in order to show that having actually seen Christ, he was equal in Apostolic authority to any of the twelve. Indeed, we may here remark that if St. Paul had only seen a vision of the Lord, he had seen nothing more than what thousands of fanatics have seen, and his Apostleship goes. Thus the light in which the Lord appeared was certainly outward and objective. Its sudden, unendurable glare prostrated the whole company. "They that were with me saw the light." "It shone round about me, and them that were with me." Upon the rest of the band it had physically no permanent effect, but it blinded Saul, and so acted upon his eyes that they were covered with film, and at his restoration to sight we are told that there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and then he received sight forthwith.

Now I must pause here and declare my conviction (and I think the reader will agree with me in it) that the vision theory, either wholly or in part, is incompatible with the Acts of the Apostles being an honest book, trustworthy for any purposes of either history or revelation; for the whole of the remainder of the history is dependent upon the outward reality of this incident, and could not have been supposed to be written except by one who knew it to be true, so far as anything occurring in this world can be known to be true.

I have no faculties for conceiving how a man who believes Christianity to be at all a revelation from God can hold this to be the account of a vision. I can imagine one in fanatic determination not to accept Christianity as from God, pushing aside the Acts as a fraudulent account, declaring that he believes St. Paul to be a myth, his epistles to be forgeries, the undesigned coincidences between the Acts and Epistles the fabrication of the cleverest literary rogue that ever took pen in hand; but I cannot understand any man calling himself a Christian, and believing in the truthfulness of the Apostle and his disciple St. Luke, yet believing this to be a vision. It is conceivable that it is the account of a falsehood, but not of a vision; for pains are taken to distinguish it from a vision—indeed,



4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto  
c Matt. xxv. him, Saul, Saul, c why persecutest thou me?  
40, &c.

in this very account, mention is made of the Lord appearing to Ananias in a vision. The Lord appeared to Ananias in a vision in order that He might not overwhelm him. The Lord appeared to Saul not in a vision, but in His glory, in order that He might overwhelm him.

4. "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul," &c. This seems as if he fell from horseback. We are told that the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, would not, if possible, ride upon horses, in obedience to Deut. xvii. 16; but that place has only to do with the king multiplying horses to go back to Egypt. If Saul was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against the Christians of Damascus, he was not likely to delay his journey on account of any such scruples. He would be afraid that the report of his commission would reach them before he did, and we may be sure that he would use all available means of dispatch.

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" This was said in the Hebrew tongue. It would, consequently, be, "Shaul, Shaul, why persecutest thou me?" These words of the Lord to St. Paul, by which he was converted, gave form and substance to his whole after-teaching. He was the Apostle not merely of justification by faith, but of union with Christ. Justification by faith was in his mind subordinated to one master idea—the union of the whole mystical body in Christ. He insisted with such force on Salvation or Justification being by grace, because grace, *i. e.*, the free unmerited favour of God, could alone bring about such a thing as union in the Body of One Who was the very and only Son of God. This greatest and most absolute form of Divine Grace, that men should partake of the nature and be members of the Body of the Son of God, was revealed to him by the very first words of Christ which he heard, "Why persecutest thou me?" This is well brought out by St. Augustine in his comment on 1 John v. 2: "If thou lovest the Head, thou lovest also the members; but if thou lovest not the members neither lovest thou the Head. Dost not thou quake at the voice uttered by the Head from heaven on behalf of His members, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? The persecutor of His members He called His persecutor; His lover the lover of His members. Now what are His members ye know, brethren:

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said,

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5. "And the Lord said." So H., L., P., most Codices, Syriac; but A., B., C., 15, 46, 61\*\*, 69, 81, 163, Vulg., read, "but he (said," &c.).

none other than the Church of God." Again, somewhere else, the same Saint writes: "If anyone has hurt your hand or your foot, you say not 'you have hurt my hand or my foot,' but 'you have hurt me.' Whilst the members were dwelling on earth, the Head in heaven cried out, and said—not, Why persecutest thou my faithful ones? but, Why persecutest thou Me?"

The inherence of Christians in the Body of Christ is the ultimate or crowning truth of Pauline Theology: and if anyone has any hesitation in admitting this let him look to Ephesians iii. 3-6, where St. Paul tells us what his special revelation is, "How," he says, "by revelation he made known unto me the mystery—that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel."

5. "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said," &c. Jesus describes Himself to Saul, so that he may at once perfectly know Whom he has been opposing. As Cornelius à Lapse writes, "He says not, I am God, I am the Son of God, for that would have led to further inquiry, and perhaps something like a denial that Saul had ever dared so to do. But when He says, 'I am Jesus,' and very probably, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth,' then Saul at once knew all. He was at once conscious of his guilt. He knew now in a moment that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, that the religion which he had endeavoured to uproot was of God, and that he must embrace it, if he would be on God's side."

"It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." These words according to the best MSS. authorities were originally not in this account, but were inserted here from Acts xxvi. 14, where there is not the smallest doubt of their genuineness. The saying is a proverbial one. Oxen, when ploughing, were urged forward with goads, that is, sharp-pointed rods, which at times they resisted, and kicked against; but this was unavailing: the more they struggled, the more the man driving them pricked them with the goad. There can be but one meaning. Saul whilst raging against the Christians had, at times at least, deep misgivings that, after all, he was in the wrong. The face of Stephen's, like that of an angel, his unanswerable arguments to show that all through their long history his

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *‘it is hard for thee to*  
*kick against the pricks.*

“I am Jesus.” So N, B, H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Sah., &c.; but A., C., E., Syriac (Schaaf), add, “of Nazareth.”

5, 6. “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise.” According to Tischendorf all this is in no Greek MS. It is in Vulg. (Clem.) and in some versions, but not in Cod. Amiat., but there are differences of reading in this latter MS.

countrymen were constantly resisting the Holy Ghost, the extraordinary circumstances attending his death, that just before they dragged him to execution he declared that he saw his Lord in heaven, his prayer for his murderers, the calmness of his spirit as he fell asleep: and in addition to this, the scenes of patience, of endurance, of charity, of meekness, of devotion to their Lord, of which his experience as an inquisitor in the houses of the Christians was continually making him the witness—all these were like sharp admonitions of conscience which at times he could hardly resist. If it be asked, Why did he resist? Why did he not resolve to inquire? We answer, he was under the dominion of passion rather than of reason, and men led by passion will too often endeavour to silence conscience and reason and right feeling, by rushing forward more determinedly, more doggedly, and at last more madly in their bad course.

This is a Greek proverb,<sup>1</sup> and we are told that no similar one has been found like it in the Hebrew or Aramaic: and this has been actually made a sort of difficulty, that the Lord should address Saul in the words of a Greek proverb rather than of a Hebrew one. But did not Saul know Greek, and if he did, why should not the Lord confront him with a Greek parabolic expression which exactly described his state of mind? I think it is not improbable that some time before this this proverb had come upon some occasion

<sup>1</sup> Even when in heaven our Lord did not disdain to use a proverb familiar to the heathen world. Compare Pindar, “Pyth.,” ii. 173. Φέρει δ' ἑλαφρῶς Ἐπαιχθένον λαβόντα Ευρίπην γ' ἀρήγας. Ποτὶ κέντρον δὲ τοι λακτίζεμεν τελέθει δίσστροφος ἄμιμος. And Æschyl., “Prom.,” 323, οὐκ οὐκ ἔλασσε χρωμένως διδασκάλῳ Πρὸς κέντρα κῦλλον ἔκτενῆς, where the Scholiast says, πρὸς κέντρα κῦλλον ἔκτενῆς ἔβουξ, λακτίζω δὲ κεντούμενος ὑπὸ κέντρον, ὥστε λακτίζω πρὸς κέντρον καὶ τὸ κῦλλον αἰμάσσει. Ὁ γὰρ πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζων τοὺς ἰδίους πόδας αἰμάσσει. Φησὶν οὖν· εἴν μοι μὴ πασῆς, βλάψης σσαντὸς —ἴσσι δὲ παροίμια. “Agamemnon,” 1633. πρὸς κέντρα μὴ λακτίζω μὴ πήσας μογῆς. Eurip., “Bacch.,” 791, θυμολύμενος πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζομαι θηπὸς ὧν θέμ. Terent., “Phorm.,” 1, 2, 27: “Venere in mentem mihi isthæc: nam quæ iuscitia est, Adversum stimulum calces!” (Note in Ep. Wordsworth.)

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, ° what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

° Luke iii. 10.  
ch. ii. 37. &  
xvi. 30.

vividly before Saul's mind, and so the Lord recalls it, and the misgiving the remembrance of it had occasioned him.

6. "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" &c. This was the sign of his real conversion, and it is the type of all other real conversions. It meant, of course, on his lips, "Lord, I am ready to do whatsoever thou wilt have me to do." And in this state of conversion, *i. e.*, of self-surrender, he continued to the end. What would the Lord have him do? He would have him give up not only all his opinions and his prejudices, but all his former friends, and some of them were very high in station, and could have been very useful to him. He would have him give up his high worldly position, his wealth, so that henceforth he should either live on the contributions of others, or by the work of his own hands. In fact, He would have him embrace and lead the Apostolic life.

"And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city," &c. The Lord here, as elsewhere, makes use of human instruments. He converts him by an act of power and grace, having no parallel in the rest of His dealings, but He delivers him to another, to a very humble member of His Church, to lay his hands upon him, and to receive him into that Church.

But here it may be asked, Why did not the Lord require Saul to retrace his journey, and go back to Jerusalem, and receive all further needful instruction and Baptism from the Apostles? Because it was the Lord's intention that he should be an independent witness—independent, that is, of the twelve. His conversion is a new departure; not in the least degree superseding the old, making nothing void in the old, and as far as I can see, adding nothing to it, except bringing out with greater clearness and energy the absolute catholicity of the Church of Christ.

Such is this conversion, unique among conversions—none like it, for it came to pass by the outward and visible sight, by the audible voice, by the all-subduing power of the Lord Himself. What shall we say of it? Only the words of God Himself are worthy of it.

7 And 'the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

f Dan. x. 7.  
See ch. xxii. 9.  
& xxvi. 13.

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

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8. "He saw no man." So C., E., H., L., P., all Cursives, Copt.; but N, A., B., e, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., read, "he saw nothing."

"The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation, the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedar trees, yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Libanus. The Lord sitteth above the water-flood: the Lord remaineth a King for ever. The Lord shall give strength unto his people: the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace."

7. "And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice," &c. Difficulties have been most unnecessarily found in this verse as compared with the other accounts. Thus it is said in xxvi. 14, "When we were all fallen to the earth," and yet here it is said, "The men which journeyed with him stood speechless." But surely the reconciliation is very easy. The sound of the Lord's voice and the blinding light prostrated them all with fear; but inasmuch as they were not blinded, but terrified, they recovered, and rose up again, but did not dare to move—in fact, they knew not where to go for safety; whereas Saul, being blinded, lay prostrate till he arose, and bade those nearest to him lead him to the place to which the Lord had directed him.

Another difficulty has been made of this verse, that here the companions of Saul heard a voice, whereas in xxii. 9, we read: "They that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake unto me." But there is nothing in this; the men who were with him heard an inarticulate sound as of thunder, whereas Saul alone distinguished the words of the Lord's voice. Nothing is more common than for men to say of a preacher or speaker, "We could not hear him;" simply meaning, we heard a sound, but could not distinguish words.

8. "And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man." After the momentary sight of the Lord in the "light which no man can approach unto," he, in all probability, lay prostrate with his face to the earth, in an agony of min-

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

10 ¶ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

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gled terror and humiliation, and it was only when he arose up, and endeavoured to look before him, that he found that he was utterly sightless. This state he describes thus, "And when I could not see for the brightness of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus." "Came into Damascus," not as he was when he approached it, "holden with pride and overwhelmed with cruelty," but abased, prostrated in spirit, and filled with such remorse for the past and uncertainty about the future that, in the words of the next verse, "He was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."

This, apparently, was not a fast for a religious purpose; but the conflict within him, between fear and hope, and, it may be, between Satan and the truth, was such that he had no desire for food. Consider what these three days must have been to him. There was no further voice, no word of either direction or of hope. He was utterly blind. How could a blind man serve the Lord? It has been said that, during these three days, he had the visions of which he speaks afterwards—the being caught up into the third heaven, the hearing the unspeakable words—but the narrative forbids anything of the sort. The first gleam of hope was the vision of Ananias coming to him that he might receive his sight.

10. "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias." Ananias, or Hananiah, signifies "grace of God." He is supposed by some to have been one of the seventy; but this is a mere conjecture. A place amongst the seventy is assigned to almost every Christian of eminence of that period not an Apostle. He was not only a believer in the Lord, but, as St. Paul witnesses, "a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwell there in Damascus." It was wisely ordered by the Lord that not only was the new Apostle who was to assert the liberty of the Gentiles an "Hebrew of the Hebrews, touching the law a Pharisee," but also that he who was destined to admit him to Christian privileges should be one "had in reputation of the Jews,"

11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of

<sup>b</sup> ch. xxi. 39. Judas for *one* called Saul, <sup>h</sup> of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias

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12. "In a vision." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Arm.; but "vision" omitted by K, A., 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Æth.

who were yet unbelievers. He is said in some of the martyrologies to have been Bishop of Damascus, and to have died by martyrdom.

"In a vision." This particular mention of the Lord's communication to Ananias being by vision is, as I have noticed, another proof that the appearance to Saul was not such, but was outward and visible.

11. "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight." This street, in all probability, exists yet, though, through encroachments on each side, it is reduced to a very narrow lane.<sup>1</sup>

"One called Saul of Tarsus." Notice how the Lord makes no allusion to his persecution, but simply to his birthplace; not Saul who came with letters from the high priest, but Saul of Tarsus, or a Tarsian.

"For, behold, he prayeth." If he prays he is a changed man. If he prays, he is no longer Mine enemy. If he prays, he must, according to My promises, have an answer to his prayers.

12. "And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias," &c.

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<sup>1</sup> Straight Street is thus described by Porter: "The old city, the nucleus of Damascus, is oval in shape, and surrounded by a wall. . . . Its greatest diameter is marked by the Straight street, which is an English mile in length. At its east end is Bab Shurky, 'the East Gate,' a fine Roman portal, having a central and two side arches. The central and southern arches have been walled up for more than eight centuries, and the northern now forms the only entrance in the city. . . . In the Roman age, and down to the time of the Mahommedan conquest (A.D. 634), a noble street ran in a straight line from the gate westward through the city. It was divided by Corinthian colonnades into three avenues opposite to the three portals. A modern street runs in the line of the old one, but it is narrow and irregular. Though many of the columns remain, they are mostly hidden by the houses and shops. . . . This is the street called Straight, 'along which Paul was led by the hand, and in which was the house of Judas where he lodged.' " (Porter's "Giant Cities of Bashan," p. 349.) The traditional house of Judas lies on the south side of the street at a little distance to the east of the Western Gate. (Lewin's "Life of St. Paul," i. p. 53.)

coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, 'how much evil he hath done to thy ' ver. 1. saints at Jerusalem :

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all \* that call on thy name.

\* ver. 21. ch.  
vii. 59. & xxii.  
16. 1 Cor. i. 2.  
2 Tim. ii. 22.

The Lord says not "hath seen thee," but "hath seen a man named Ananias." From this we gather with certainty that Saul and Ananias had not hitherto known one another.

"Coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might," &c. I think we should gather from this that this was the first clear intimation that Saul received that his sight would be restored. He had very likely humbly submitted to the loss of his sight, as a very inadequate chastisement for his hatred to Christ and His people, and when he had so humbled himself he received the vision of hope.

13. "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man," &c. The Christian Jews who were dispersed at the death of Stephen would have informed him of the violence and determination of the new inquisitor.

"To thy saints." This is the first place where Christians are called saints. The word "Saint" really means persons set apart, or separated to the service of God. It is frequently in the Old Testament applied to the people of Israel as separated from the heathen world to witness to God (Psalm lxxix. 2), and in the New Testament to those who by baptism and their profession of faith in Christ, are still further set apart to be "a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Notice the expression, "Thy saints." Those who have the highest claim to the word are saints of Christ as well as of God.

14. "And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all," &c. The news of his commission would get abroad from those who accompanied him, as they had now been in the city three days, but very probably the nature and purpose of the appearance had been kept secret.

15. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a



1 ch. xiii. 2. &  
xxii. 21. & xxvi.  
17. Rom. i. 1.  
1 Cor. xv. 10.  
Gal. i. 15.  
Eph. iii. 7, 8.  
1 Tim. ii. 7.  
2 Tim. i. 11.  
m Rom. i. 5.  
& xi. 13.  
Gal. ii. 7, 8.  
n ch. xxv. 22,  
23. & xxvi. 1,  
&c.  
o ch. xx. 23. &  
xxi. 11. 2 Cor.  
xi. 23.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way : for <sup>l</sup> he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before <sup>m</sup> the Gentiles, and <sup>n</sup> kings, and the children of Israel :

16 For <sup>o</sup> I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

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chosen vessel unto me." "Go thy way," *i.e.*, "fulfil my errand of mercy."

"For he is a chosen vessel unto me," *i.e.*, a vessel of election—a choice vessel. When God chooses any instrument, we must believe that He makes a good choice—a choice adapted in all respects to fulfil the purposes for which He chooses; and, as we shall see, no one could have been chosen for His great work more fitly than St. Paul. Far, far more than half the acrimony which has been occasioned by the setting forth of the doctrine of election would have been avoided, if men had but considered that God does not choose merely arbitrarily, but because He is a wise God, most wisely, and because He is a merciful God, most mercifully, and because He is a just God, most justly; and that He will certainly not call to account those whom He has not chosen as if He had chosen them.

"To bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." It is remarkable how in the three accounts of the conversion of St. Paul, there is in each one an advance upon the former in the matter of the call of the Gentiles. In this first account it is only slightly alluded to; in the second, that in Acts xxii., it is twice mentioned (verses 15 and 21); and in the last account, that in Acts xxvi., it is very fully revealed.

"And kings." This was fulfilled when he preached the Gospel before Herod, Agrippa, and perhaps before Nero; and if we include under the term "kings" chief magistrates and rulers of large provinces, it is probable that many such heard his witness to Christ.

16. "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer." Wonderful words! Not, I will show him what a place in heaven I have prepared for him; or, what a mark he shall make in the world and in the Church, not even what souls he shall win to the obedience of My Gospel, but "how great things he must suffer for

17 <sup>p</sup> And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and <sup>a</sup> putting his hands on him said, <sup>p</sup> ch. xxii. 12, 13.  
 Brother Saul, the Lord, *even Jesus*, that appeared <sup>q</sup> ch. viii. 17.  
 unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and <sup>r</sup> be filled with the Holy Ghost. <sup>r</sup> ch. ii. 4. & iv. 31. & viii. 17. & xiii. 52.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been

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my name's sake." And were not these words always present with the Apostle? Did he not regard the call to suffer for Christ as a precious gift from God? Does he not write to one Church, "To you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. i. 29); to another, "We glory in tribulations also" (Rom. v. 3); and to his best-loved disciple, "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. ii. 12)? Places like this seem to raise the question whether Christianity is left among us.

17. "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting," &c. The Lord had appeared to Ananias in a vision, and so he was suffered to remonstrate with Him. Now when he awoke he perceived what had been made known to him respecting His will, and he hesitated not a moment, but went into the house and put his hands on Saul. What was this laying on of hands? Evidently not as confirmation, for he had not yet been baptized; but for the restoration of his sight. It was the fulfilment of the promise, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 18).

Notice how he addresses the man who but three days before sought his life as "brother."

Notice also how he refers his mission as to its authority not to God only, but to "the Lord, even Jesus, who had appeared to thee in the way."

18. "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales," &c. These scales were allowed to form on his eyes, and to drop off suddenly, to show that the blindness was not imaginary, or proceeding from some abnormal state of the brain, but was occasioned by the blinding light from the Person of the Lord. What the particular disease of the eyes was it is impossible to say.

scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.

\* ch. xxvi. 20. ' Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, ' that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said; "Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither

" ch. viii. 3.  
ver. 1. Gal. i.  
13, 23.

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18. "Forthwith" omitted by N, A., B., C., H., P., 61, and forty-five other Cursives, Vulg., Copt., Syriac; but E., L., many Cursives, and some versions retain it.

20. "He preached Christ." So H., L., P., most Cursives; but "he preached Jesus" in N, A., B., C., E., Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., &c.

It may have been the physical consequence of so sudden and overpowering a light, or it may have been wholly supernatural.

"And was baptized." Saul had been converted by the sight of Jesus in the glory which He had with the Father. He had been separated from his mother's womb to be a vessel of election, and yet this did not for a moment supersede the necessity of baptism, that he might be made a member of Christ. Nor was this outward reception a mere form to assure him that he had already received the inward grace at the time of his conversion. So far from this he had not yet received the remission of sins, though destined for it, for Ananias was commissioned to say to him "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16). The formal reception of forgiveness was suspended till he was baptized into the One Body.

19. "And when he had received meat, he was strengthened." He had been without food three days, and would be utterly prostrated.

"Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus." This seems most undoubtedly to describe what took place immediately after his conversion and restoration to sight, no interval whatsoever—certainly none of any length—intervening.

20-21. "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues . . . bound unto the Chief Priests?" This also seems to follow immediately upon his conversion. The amazement manifested by

for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the Chief Priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, \*and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, = ch. xviii. 28. proving that this is very Christ.

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those who heard him would not have been natural if he had been converted three years before, and had retired at once to a distance and had come back again, for very soon the extraordinary circumstances of his conversion would have been in everybody's mouth: the attendants also, those that had been with him, would have described their own prostration, and the light shining about them, and how they led their leader by the hand to the house of Judas, after which they had no further communication with him on the object of his mission. In such a case his change of views would have become well known. The rulers of the synagogues would testify that no letters from the chief priest had been presented to them; and some reason must be given for the instantaneous collapse of such a mission. This astonishment, then, could only have been evinced when he preached *immediately* upon his conversion, because they could not account for the change in any way whatsoever, for the report of the attendants respecting the light shining around would not explain matters, because they understood not the words spoken by the Lord.

22. "But Saul increased the more in strength," *i.e.*, in Divine grace.

"And confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascos . . . very Christ." We must remember that this (I say it with all reverence), was no very difficult matter. The ideas of the Jews respecting the Messiah were of the most confused sort, because the statements respecting the Messiah in the Old Testament were of the most conflicting character, so that to reconcile them they were compelled to invent the doctrine of two Messiahs, a suffering and a glorified one. The Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth at once reduced to order what was before in utter confusion. At once men could apprehend how it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again the third day, and that One Who could do such things as the Gospels ascribe to the Lord must be the Son of God, in the highest sense in which such a term could be understood.

A. D. 37.  
 7 ch. xxiii. 12.  
 & xxv. 3.  
 2 Cor. xi. 26.

23 ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled,  
 7 the Jews took counsel to kill him :

23. "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him." When were these many days? How many were they? Did anything take place in them which is not narrated by St. Luke?

Yes. In Gal. i. 15-18, there is the notice of a journey to Arabia, which must have taken place very shortly after his conversion, and which, if all the notices of the life of the Apostle were placed in chronological order, must be placed somewhere between verses 18 and 24. I will give the account and its context here. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were Apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again into Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days, but other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

Now why does the Apostle write all this? Evidently to show that his Apostleship, both as regards its knowledge and power, was not derived from the twelve, or from Peter or any other of them, but from the Lord Himself. It was, as I said, a new departure. And so he writes:—"Immediately" (*i.e.*, after my conversion), "I conferred not with flesh and blood." This may mean, "I did not receive the advice tendered to me, or perhaps I did not do what was natural—what my natural desires prompted me to do—to go at once to the members of the Apostolic College at Jerusalem, that I might receive from them that knowledge of the doctrine and life of the Lord, in which, from having been with Him from the beginning they were so well able to instruct me; but I was guided by the Lord Himself to go into retirement into Arabia, there to receive from Him that Gospel which was in all respects the same as that preached by the twelve, but which it pleased Christ to impart to me independently of their ministrations." The Lord was pleased so to instruct St. Paul that he could say, "The Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." I believe, then, that during the period of this retirement

24 ' But their laying await was known of Saul. ' 2 Cor. xi. 32.

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into Arabia, the Apostle received those visions and revelations to which he alludes in 2 Cor. xii. ; and also that instruction in the facts of the life of Christ on earth, which is referred to in 1 Cor. xi. 23.

And now where are we to insert this account of the journey to Arabia? Most commentators suppose that it was before St. Paul preached in the synagogues—in fact, that it was even before the "certain days" which he spent with the disciples at Damascus; but to place it here is to bring in a perfectly gratuitous discrepancy between St. Luke's account and St. Paul's. St. Luke tells us plainly that St. Paul was "certain days" at Damascus, in which he preached in the synagogues. St. Paul says nothing to contradict this. He only tells us that instead of immediately doing what was natural, *i.e.*, going to Jerusalem to be instructed in the Gospel by the Lord's companions, he followed the direct guiding of the Lord, and before communicating with the Apostles went to receive revelations in Arabia.

I should, then, insert the account of the journey to Arabia between verses 22 and 23. The "many days" of verse 23 are comprised in the "three years" of Gal. i. 18.

Much sentiment has been expended upon this, to show that the journey to Arabia took place before any preaching whatsoever on Saul's part; men say that he needed repose, that he needed refreshment and change of scene, that he needed instruction—one goes so far as to say that it would have been unseemly for him to have commenced preaching at once. The only consideration worth notice is that he needed further instruction, but they who urge this forget that he was to be "filled with the Holy Ghost." It is not said that he built up his fellow Christians in the high doctrines afterwards revealed to him, but that he preached Christ in the synagogues that He was the Son of God, and that he confounded the Jews. It is to be remembered that Saul, through his Jewish education, had an accurate knowledge of the Old Testament, and would be perfectly alive to every passage to which a Messianic interpretation was attached, and that the spiritual insight which he had received would enable him with the greatest ease to apply these prophecies or types to the case of Jesus of Nazareth.

24, 25. "But their laying await was known . . . by the wall in a basket." This persecution by the Jews, and escape of Paul, is

And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and <sup>a</sup>let him

<sup>a</sup> So Josh. ii. down by the wall in a basket.

15.

<sup>1</sup> Sam. xix. 12.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xxii. 17.

Gal. i. 17, 18.

26 And <sup>b</sup> when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they

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25. "The disciples." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Sah., Copt.; but N., A., B., C., F., 61, Vulg. (Amiat.), read, "his disciples."

alluded to by him in ii. Corinth. xi. 32, 33. "In Damascus, the Governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands." Aretas had, at this time, obtained the government of Damascus, and being naturally desirous to conciliate the Jews, he lent himself to their designs against Paul. Difficulties have been raised upon the fact of Aretas having power in Damascus at this particular juncture, the best solution of which I give in a note.<sup>1</sup>

26, 27. "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem . . . was a disciple . . . how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of

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<sup>1</sup> "Aretas now seized upon Damascus by force, and annexed it to Arabia Petraea . . . but how could he, a petty prince, have dared to take up arms against the Emperor of Rome? or if he dared, how must he not have been instantly crushed? Another solution offers itself as much more probable. No sooner had Tiberius, the great patron of Herod Antipas, directed Vitellius, his general, to bring Aretas to account, than Tiberius himself died (on the 16th of March, A.D. 37), being succeeded by Caligula, the personal enemy of Herod Antipas, and the friend of Agrippa. Caligula, on his accession, made a new distribution of the provinces of the East; and as there was great intimacy between Agrippa and the Damascenes, whose cause Agrippa had formally argued before Flaccus, the prefect of Syria, it is natural, and may be assumed, that the Damascenes, by the influence of Agrippa at Court, obtained the Emperor's fiat that Damascus, at its own request, should be made over to the King of Petra. Damascus remained an appanage of Petra from this time, during the reigns of Caligula and Claudius, for we cannot otherwise account for the remarkable fact, that the coins of Damascus have the heads of the Emperors Augustus and Tiberius, but not the head of any Emperor from the death of Tiberius till the time of Nero, when the head of the Roman Emperor reappears. This shows that during the reigns of Caligula and Claudius, Damascus was detached from the Roman province of Syria, and annexed to some independent prince. There cannot be a doubt, that at the commencement of the reign of Caligula, Aretas, by whatever means he attained this dignity, was in the peaceful possession of Damascus. As a new sovereign he was anxious to gain popularity with all classes of his subjects . . . as regards the Jews, he accorded to them all the privileges which they were allowed in cities where they were most favoured . . . They were permitted, as at Antioch and Alexandria, to govern their own community by their own peculiar laws; and the local chief of their nation, or Ethnarch, had authority to arrest and punish any delinquent amongst his own people." (Lewin's "Life of St. Paul," chap. v., vol. i., page 69).

were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 <sup>c</sup> But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* <sup>c ch. iv. 36.  
& xiii. 2.</sup> to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, <sup>d</sup> and how he had preached boldly <sup>d ver. 20. 22.</sup> at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 And <sup>e</sup> he was with them coming in and <sup>e Gal. i. 18.</sup> going out at Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus,

29. "Of the Lord Jesus." So H., L., P., most Cursives. "Of the Lord" (omitting Jesus) in N, A., B., E., 40, 69, 100, 163, Vulg., Sah., Copt.

Jesus." From the sojourn of Saul so long in Arabia, and from (as some suggest) the want of intercourse between Jerusalem and Damascus owing to political disturbances, it is probable that the Christians of Jerusalem knew him only as a persecutor. We are told by himself, in Gal. i. 18, that he went up to see, or have an interview with, Peter. This was brought about by Barnabas, between whom and Paul many conjecture there had been friendship in former times; indeed, some go so far as to say (without a tittle of evidence) that they were fellow students together in the schools of Tarsus. If a suspicion had got abroad (as evidently there had) that he was a spy, the Christians would naturally prevent his going to the Apostles. But Barnabas, "a good man," and so willing to believe what is good of all, took the neophyte, and declared that he had already exposed himself to danger for the sake of the Lord.

"Brought him to the Apostles." From Gal. i. 19 we gather that the only Apostles in Jerusalem were St. Peter, and James the Lord's brother, who, if not an Apostle, was reckoned as one, from his position as Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem.

28. "And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." This means that all suspicions were cast away, and he lived for the short time that he was in Jerusalem (fifteen days, Gal. i. 18,) as one of themselves.

29. "And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and



and disputed against the 'Grecians: \* but they went about

f ch. vi. 1. & to slay him.

xi. 20.

\* ver. 23.

2 Cor. xi. 26.

disputed against the Grecians," &c. He disputed, that is, in those very synagogues which had been the foremost to oppose Stephen, asserting boldly those very truths, on account of which he had himself joined in the persecution of Stephen, and, of course, as he foresaw, drawing upon himself the same enmity through which the Protomartyr suffered death.

30. "Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea," &c. They sent him to Tarsus, his native place, not by sea, as might have been imagined from the mention of Cæsarea, but by the coast line, for he speaks of "preaching throughout all the coasts of Judea," which must have been at this time, and then coming into the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Acts xxvi. 20, Gal. i. 21).

Such is the conversion of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It may be well to notice two or three reasons why Saul of Tarsus was thus chosen of the Lord to see Him, and become at once the foremost champion of the Cross.

First of all, the conversion of Christ's bitterest enemy was, after the Resurrection, and the Pentecostal gift of tongues, the greatest evidence for the truth of the Gospel conceivable. For what miracle could be greater, what fact more unaccountable on all natural principles, than that Saul should be one day breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the holders of a faith which three or four days after he himself proclaimed as the truth of God? This sudden change in the teeth of the man's whole past life, of all his prejudices, and all his worldly interests, is as great a miracle as can well be conceived, and requires some adequate cause. That cause was the visible appearance of the Son of God in heaven. No inward vision, no trance, no cerebration, could possibly have accounted for it, for if it had been anything of such a sort, the moment that Saul awoke he would have said, as any other man would have said, "This is but a dream;"—but it was no dream, for in a moment he was sightless, as well as powerless and spiritless. It must have been an evidence for the Gospel such as had not been since Pentecost, and all the rest of the book of the Acts proves this, for

30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

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from this time there is a steady progress of the Church till the end.<sup>1</sup>

Besides this, there was this difference between the testimony of St. Paul and that, say, of St. Peter: St. Peter's was the testimony of an attached friend, St. Paul's that of the bitterest of enemies. So that the Lord left unbelievers without excuse. "If you will not receive the testimony of My friends and companions, receive at least that of My enemy. You see how I can stretch forth My right Hand of power, and seize the foremost among you and make him My willing slave."

Then, in the next place, St. Paul was intended by the Lord to be His Chief Missionary to the Gentiles, to those who were "without," alienated from God by wicked works, and so "in the history of his sin, and its most gracious forgiveness, he exemplifies far more than his brother Apostles his own Gospel; that we are all guilty before God, and can be saved only by His free bounty. In his own words, 'for this cause obtained he mercy, that in him first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting'" (1 Tim. i. 16).

"Then, following on this, his conversion and its antecedents gave him on the one hand an extended insight into the ways and designs of providence, and on the other hand into the workings of sin in the human heart, and the various modes of thinking to which the mind may be trained. It taught him not to despair of the worst sinners, to be sharp-sighted in detecting the sparks of faith, amid corrupt habits of life, and to enter into the various temptations to which human nature is exposed. It wrought in him a profound humility, which disposed him (if we may so say) to bear meekly the abundance of the revelations given him; and it imparted to him a practical wisdom how to apply them to the conversion of others, so as to be weak with the weak, and strong with the strong, to bear their burdens, to instruct and encourage them, to "strengthen his brethren," to rejoice and weep with them, in a word, to be an earthly paraclete, the comforter, help, and guide of his brethren." (J. H. Newman, "Parochial Sermons," vol. ii., series ix., on the Conversion of St. Paul.)

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Lyttleton's "Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul" deserves careful reading.

31 <sup>h</sup> Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

<sup>a</sup> See ch. viii.  
1.

Anno  
DOMINI  
38.  
<sup>i</sup> ch. viii. 14.

32 ¶ And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

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31. "Then had the churches . . . were edified . . . were multiplied." So (E.), H., L., P, and the greater part of Cursives; but M, A., B., C., 5, 13, 14\*, 15, 18, 27, 29, 30, 40, &c. Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt. read "then had the Church rest . . . was edified . . . was multiplied."

31. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa . . . were multiplied." This seems to follow upon the removal of so forward and energetic a persecutor as Saul from among them.

"And were edified." That is, were built up, as if the Church were an house or temple. So St. Peter, "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." And St. Paul "built upon the foundations of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone." Souls were added to the spiritual house as stones to a building; and these stones were each one built up in faith and love.

"And walking," *i. e.*, progressing. There can be no standing still in the Church.

"In the fear of the Lord,"—in the constant reverential sense of His presence—

And "in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." The word implies more than our "comfort." It includes teaching from within, by the Spirit's illumination.

32. "And it came to pass, as Peter passed through all quarters," *i. e.*, in the way of overseeing the churches, and organizing them as their Apostle.

"He came down also to the saints,"—the Christians which dwelt at Lydda, a town situated between Jerusalem and Joppa, about twenty miles from the former and ten from the latter. Lydda is mentioned in the Old Testament as Lod (Ezra ii. 33). It yet remains as a village bearing the same name.

The reader must remember that this journey of St. Peter is mentioned principally as bringing him to Cæsarea for the conversion of Cornelius.

33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, <sup>k</sup> Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

<sup>k</sup> ch. iii. 6, 16.  
& iv. 10.

35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and <sup>l</sup> Saron saw him, and <sup>m</sup> turned to the Lord.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Chron. v. 16.  
<sup>m</sup> ch. xi. 21.

36 ¶ Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named

34. "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." So N, B., C. "Jesus, the Christ," with A., E., H., L., P., and most Cursives.

33. "And there he found a certain man named Æneas," &c. The second syllable is short, and his name is not that of the Trojan hero.

34. "And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," &c. This was in truth the word of faith. Peter, no doubt, had prayed earnestly, and it was revealed to him that this afflicted believer was a fit subject for a miraculous cure; so, without hesitation, he acted as if the healing would take place at once, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."

"Make thy bed," *i. e.*, "roll it up," for it was a mat. There was no need that Æneas should carry his bed home, as did the sick of the palsy. He was to show his faith by arising at once, and doing what he had not been able to do for years.

35. "And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned," &c. Saron has the article before it "Lydda and the Saron." It is the celebrated plain of Sharon, remarkable for its fertility and beauty. Thus Isaiah xxxv. 2, speaking of the fertility which will be found in the very wilderness, prophecies, "It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon."

36. "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha . . . Dorcas . . . almsdeeds which she did." Joppa was the port of Jerusalem. Thus in 2 Chron. ii. 16, Hiram thus writes to Solomon:—"We will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need. And we will bring it to thee in flotes by sea to Joppa, and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem."

Tabitha, which by interpretation is called || Dorcas: this  
 † Or, Doe, or, woman was full <sup>a</sup> of good works and almsdeeds  
 Roe.  
<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 10. which she did.

Tit. iii. 8.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she  
 was sick, and died: whom when they had washed,  
 • ch. i. 13. they laid *her* in ° an upper chamber.

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the  
 disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him  
 † Or, be two men, desiring *him* that he would not || delay  
 grieved. to come to them.

38. "Desiring him that he would not delay to come to them." So H., L., D., most  
 Cursives, Syriac, Arm., Æth.; but N., A., B., C., E., 40, 61, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., read  
 "intreating him, Delay not to come to us."

Tabitha and Dorcas have the same meaning, roe or antelope, the  
 one Hebrew, the other Greek.

"This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she  
 did." Such was her commendation by the Church. "How great  
 a treasure in heaven is a life *full of good works*. A good widow  
 who thus employs every part of her life in the service of God, will  
 rise up in judgment against those whose whole life is but, as it  
 were, one great empty space, and who do nothing for eternity."  
 (Quesnel)

37. "And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and  
 died: . . . upper chamber." Bishop Wordsworth notices that  
 this is the third instance in this book of attention to the decencies  
 of Christian burial; the other two are v. 6, and viii. 2.

38. "And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa . . . come to  
 them." Was this message sent when she had fallen sick only, or  
 when she was already dead? Most probably the latter. They  
 seem to have laid her in the upper chamber, and not to have buried  
 her immediately after death, as the usual custom was, because they  
 hoped something from the visit of Peter. His Master had raised  
 the dead, and probably they knew of instances unrecorded in this  
 book of the Acts in which he had done the same.

39. "Then Peter arose and went with them . . . made while  
 she was with them." Meyer suggests that from the middle voice of  
 the verb "to shew" being used, they exhibited on themselves these

39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40 But Peter <sup>p</sup> put them all forth, and <sup>q</sup> kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body <sup>r</sup> said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

<sup>p</sup> Matt. ix. 25.

<sup>q</sup> ch. vii. 80.

<sup>r</sup> Mark v. 41.

<sup>42.</sup> John xi.

<sup>43.</sup>

41 And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; <sup>s</sup> and many believed in the Lord.

<sup>s</sup> John xi. 45.

& xii. 11.

coats and garments. The word for coats rather signifies inner garments, and the word for garments, outer ones. Quesnel says:—"There cannot be a greater encomium for a Christian after his death, than that which is made by the tears of the poor, and by the alms of which their hands are full."

40. "But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down," &c. He put them forth in order that he might be the better able to pray earnestly and without distraction, for the miracle was not brought about by the word of Peter—as the miracles of His Master were by His mere word—but by the prayer of faith.

"Tabitha, arise." Expositors one and all notice that by the change of a single letter this would be the same word which was said to Jairus' daughter—in the case of Dorcas, "Tabitha, cumi," in that of Jairus' daughter, "Talitha, cumi."

41. "And he gave her his hand." Cornelius à Lapide supposes that, owing to her sickness, she was weak and could not rise from the bed on her feet, and that the hand of Peter restored her to her strength.

"When he had called the saints and widows." Because the saints and widows are noticed separately, it has been surmised that the latter might some of them have been not yet believers, but they are mentioned now because they were said before to have been in the room only perhaps a few minutes before, and so their recall is separately noticed.

42-43. "And it was known . . . one Simon a tanner." This

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in  
 'ch. x. 6. Joppa with one 'Simon a tanner.

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should have been annexed to the following account. It was doubtless by the particular guidance of the Spirit that he continued in Joppa, in order that he might admit Cornelius as a Gentile into the Church.

## CHAP. X.

**T**HERE was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius,  
A.D. 41.

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1 "There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius," &c. We have now to consider the most important crisis in the history of the Church, and this is, the formal admission of Gentiles, as such, *i. e.*, in a state of uncircumcision, into the Church of Christ. However Cornelius might believe in the God of Abraham, and worship Him, and even keep the Jewish hours of prayer, and observe other edifying ordinances of the Old Testament, he was yet a man uncircumcised, and so was without the pale of God's covenant.

It was the will of God that in his then state of exclusion he was to be brought into the Church of Christ—that mystical body in which there is no distinction of race—in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. The foremost Apostle—he to whom Christ had said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church;" "and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"—was to declare to him the Gospel of salvation, and command that he should be baptized, and then tarry with him in his house, and eat with him, and treat him in all respects as his equal in the Lord.

Taking the New Testament as our guide, it seems impossible to over-estimate the significance of this event. In it was made known

a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,

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the mystery hid from ages and generations, "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the Gospel" (Ephes. iii. 6). It is as if the river of Divine grace had hitherto run in the narrowest of gorges, and suddenly emerges, and begins to fertilize boundless plains hitherto desert, and makes them as Eden, as the garden of the Lord.

It is a reversal of God's dealings in the diffusion of spiritual light, for whereas to the very death of Christ the word of truth had been preached only to one race, and not one command had been given to Moses, or to David, or to Isaiah, to evangelize one Moabite, one Ammonite, one Babylonian—nay, even the Lord Himself had strictly charged His Apostles not to go into the way of the Gentiles—now all is changed, now begin to take effect those words of grace: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

The place in which this mighty change was inaugurated, the instrument by whom, the person in whom, are all remarkable.

The place is Cæsarea, the Gentile capital of the Holy Land, the seat of the Procurator, and the abode of the garrison which kept Palestine in order. It was to all intents and purposes a Gentile city. The Jews were relatively less numerous there than in any other city of Judæa.

The instrument by which this change was inaugurated was Simon Peter: not the Apostle Paul, whom we should have expected, but St. Peter, who ever afterwards, more than St. Paul, retained the confidence of the Jews who believed. We may safely say that none other than he could have brought the matter to a successful issue, for we shall see that he, head apostle though he was, was called sharply to account for the action he took in this matter. And even he required a vision from God to give him confidence that he was doing the will of God in baptizing the uncircumcised.

The person, in whose case this change in God's dealings commenced, was an officer of the Roman army, though a subordinate one. His name of Cornelius seems to imply that he was of very good family, one of its members being the celebrated Scipio



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

<sup>a</sup> ver. 22. ch. viii. 2. & xxii. 12.  
<sup>b</sup> ver. 35.

Africanus (Publius Cornelius Scipio), and Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, was another. He was an officer of the band, or cohort, called the Italian band,<sup>1</sup> and so apparently, though quartered in Judæa, entirely Gentile. It has been supposed to have been the body-guard of the governors, or prætors; and, if so, his position might have been really much higher than the name of his military rank denotes.

This man God prepared by His grace to be the favoured one in whom the door of faith was to be opened to all mankind, for we read that he was—

2. “A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.” A devout man (Vulg. *religiosus*), *i.e.*, a reverent and careful worshipper of the true God.

“And one that feared God with all his house.” This must have come about either because Cornelius strove to impress upon his household that the God of Israel was the one true God, and so his case is exactly parallel to that of Abraham, of whom God said, “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment” (Gen. xviii. 19); or it may have come about through Cornelius seeking out those amongst whom the fear of the Lord was beginning to be felt, so that his house might be to them a place of protection from the dangers to which they were exposed.

“Which gave much alms to the people.” There can be no true grace unless the selfishness and covetousness of the natural heart is broken up.

“And prayed to God alway.” That is, not only at the stated hours, but whenever he felt his need of God’s help and guidance.

The heathen state of this man puts to shame the evangelical state of multitudes of professing Christians.

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the Italian cohort is found also in an ancient inscription upon a marble tablet found in the forum of Sempronius in Rome, which, given in full, is—“Cohors militum Italicorum voluntaria, quæ est in Syriâ.” Biscoe says, “Separate independent cohorts were sometimes formed out of the choice of the legionary soldiers, and were esteemed more honourable than the legions.”

3 ° He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, c. ver. 30. ch. xi. 13. and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

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3. "He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day," &c. The word "evidently" is to be taken with "vision," and is usually translated "openly," so that it means that the vision of the angel was an open, manifest, and, as we should say, objective appearance, not merely an impression on the brain with nothing outward corresponding to it. "About the ninth hour of the day," that is, about the time of evening prayer, about three in the afternoon.

4. "And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord?" Perhaps at the first he thought that it was a man, but when he looked steadfastly he clearly recognized that it was a visitant from the unseen world, and so he was afraid, as all are in the presence of the supernatural.

"And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." "For a memorial." This is a sacrificial word, and is applied in Levit. ii. 2, and many other places, to denote that part of the sacrifice which was burnt or consumed, to remind God by the smoke ascending up to heaven of the purpose of the sacrifice—the doing away of sin, and the reception of the worshipper into His favour.

In this case it was not frankincense, or fine flour and oil, but prayers and almsdeeds, the works of one who was sincerely seeking God.

This place, with very many others, shows us that prayers and almsdeeds, and no doubt all other acts of virtue and self-denial, have their value in the sight of God, and are approved by Him, and will be rewarded by Him, even though those who offer them may not have clear views of the system of Evangelical grace.

Works of goodness and devotion, though done by heathen, and by very partially enlightened Christians, are not valueless in the sight of God, but will most surely be remembered by Him for good.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter :

<sup>d</sup> ch. ix. 43.

6 He lodgeth with one <sup>d</sup> Simon a tanner, whose

<sup>c</sup> ch. xi. 14.

house is by the sea side : <sup>e</sup> he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually ;

8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 ¶ On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and <sup>f</sup> ch. xi. 5, &c. drew nigh unto the city, <sup>f</sup> Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour :

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6. "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." This whole sentence omitted by  $\kappa$ ,  $\alpha$ ,  $B$ ,  $C$ ,  $F$ ,  $L$ ,  $P$ , 13, 31, 61, and about eighty other Cursives, Vulg. (Amiat.), Syr., Sah.; but retained by a few Cursives.

5, 6. "And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon . . . oughtest to do." The way in which St. Peter is here described to Cornelius, shows that though he may have heard of Christianity, he was as yet perfectly ignorant of the Church and its ministry.

Notice that the angel is not commissioned to teach him one word of Christian truth. He is simply sent to direct him to the Apostle who will teach him the will of God respecting belief in His Son.

7, 8. "And when the angel was departed . . . sent them to Joppa." It is to be particularly noticed that Cornelius, before he sends these three of his household to Peter, acquaints them with the vision of the angel. This shows that they could not be indifferent to, but were deeply interested in, whatever tended to the further revelation of the will of God.

9. "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh," &c. Joppa was thirty Roman, and about thirty-six English miles from Cæsarea, consequently, if Cornelius sent them towards the evening of the day in which he received the vision, they would arrive at the house of Cornelius about noon. It was a little before this that—

"Peter went up upon the house-top to pray about the sixth

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

11 And <sup>ε</sup> saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth :

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11. "Descending unto him." "Unto him" omitted by N, A., B., C<sup>2</sup>, E., b, 13, 15, 18, 27, 29, 40, 61, 68, 69, 100, 105, 163, 180, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Arm., Æth.; retained by L., P., and most Cursives.

11. "Knit at the four corners, and let down." So C\*, L., P., 61, most Cursives; but "knit . . . and" (δέδεμένον και) omitted by N, A., B., C<sup>2</sup>, E., 40, 81, 180, Vulg., Copt., Æth., which read, "a great sheet at the four corners let down."

hour." Eastern houses have flat roofs, and much more use is made of them for conversation and retirement than of the roofs of ours. In the Book of Deuteronomy it is commanded that a parapet should be made round the roof of every house, so that no one should fall over accidentally, and blood be brought upon the house (Deut. xxii. 8). Amongst many illustrations of its use for conversation, we may mention 1 Samuel ix. 25, where it is said that Samuel communed with Saul on the top of the house.

"The sixth hour," that is, midday.

10. "And he became very hungry, and would have eaten : . . . into a trance." It is supposed that his hunger, which may have been occasioned by his having taken nothing till that hour, or may have been the direct effect of Divine power to prepare him for the revelation, was the occasion of his fainting, and the trance, or ecstasis, betokened a state of the body in which its functions were suspended, and the soul more free and ready to depart from it, and so more alive to the impressions of the unseen world upon which it was on the borders.

11. "And saw heaven opened." It is important that this should be noted, as much of the significance of the vision depends upon it. Being let down from heaven it was, as it were, let down from God.

"And a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet," &c. "Vessel" here signifies "receptacle." "A great sheet," the same word (θήβωνη) used for our blessed Lord's winding sheet of fine linen.

"Knit at the four corners and let down to the earth." If the

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

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

12. "Fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things." N. A., B., C<sup>2</sup>., omit "wild beasts," and read "fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth."

word knit or fastened (*δεδεμένον*) is retained, then this means that the sheet was let down fastened to the extremities (*ἀρχαῖς*) of the four cords by which it was suspended.

If, however, *δεδεμένον* is to be omitted, then it signifies "let down by four corners," or ends, attention being drawn to the square appearance which it presented, each corner directed to a quarter of the heavens, and so signifying the extension of the Church to all parts of the world.<sup>1</sup>

12. "Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts," &c. The all (manner) refers not so much to the variety of species, as that clean and unclean things were mingled together. Indeed, it seems certain from St. Peter's answer that the prominence both in numbers and near position was given to the unclean. And so taking these creatures to represent the various peoples and nations of the earth, the vast multitude, indeed all but a very insignificant fraction, were unclean.

13. "And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat." Peter, no doubt, recognised this as the voice of Christ, for he answered, "Not so, Lord." It is to be remarked that the first meaning of the word to kill (*θύω*), used here, is to kill in sacrifice. It is a sacrificial word, and would in the ears of Peter sound more like "immolate." In the Old Testament there was an idea of sacrifice connected

<sup>1</sup> I give the following note from "Notes on the Gospels and Acts," by F. M.:—"At four corners:" *ἀρχῆς* = any extremity, e.g., of a bandage, Galen (apud Wits.); of a rope, Herod. iv. 60, Eur. Hippol. 761; of a plank or rafter, Philo. ii. 117 (quoted by Dr. Burton); and Bishop Middleton, from the article's absence, too hastily inclined to translate with four strings, as *ἑτάπτοντες ἀρχὰς στρώμας*, Diod. Sic. i. 35, where, however, *ἀρχαῖς* is neither more nor less than 'ends.' All difficulty vanishes on rendering literally, and simply understanding that the 'points of suspension' were not the very extreme corners, but left a margin, or valance, hanging down all round in four festoons; and then it cannot be gainsaid that the sheet was let down by four corners, though not (*ταῖς γωνίαις*) by the four corners of it."

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; <sup>h</sup> for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, <sup>1</sup> What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

<sup>h</sup> Lev. xi. 4.  
& xx. 25.  
Deut. xiv. 3, 7.  
Ezek. iv. 14.  
<sup>1</sup> Matt. xv. 11.  
ver. 28.  
Rom. xiv. 14,  
17, 20. 1 Cor.  
x. 25. 1 Tim.  
iv. 4. Tit. i.  
15.

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14. "Common or unclean." So C., D., E., L., P., 81, 61, most Cursives, Copt.; but N, A., B., several Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Syriac, Arm., read "and unclean."

with all slaughterings of animals for food. Thus Proverbs xvii. 1: "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife." This association would make Peter shrink still more from killing the creatures in the sheet.

14. "But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is," &c. It is to be carefully remembered that this was the first clear <sup>1</sup> intimation given to Peter or any other Apostle that God had abolished the Levitical distinctions between clean and unclean animals. Some commentators speak as if St. Peter's answer indicated prejudice, and an undue attachment yet lingering in him to the Levitical ritual; but it was not so. It would have been a bad sign if he had been forward of himself to throw off the obligation of rules imposed by God, and to which his Lord Himself, whilst living on earth, had adhered (Gal. iv. 4). He must wait God's permission, and that permission was withheld till this moment.

We are to remember that this remonstrance was in a vision. It was not the same as if he had been in the use of all his waking faculties.

15. "And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This is one of the most pregnant sayings in the Word of God. It implies that the efficacy of the All-cleansing Blood had been applied to all animate creation. It corresponds to those words of the Spirit, "By Christ to reconcile all things to himself, whether they be

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<sup>1</sup> I say "clear"; for the Apostles were not likely to have as yet acted on the inference to be most probably drawn from the use of the masculine participle in Mark vii. 19, "Making clean all meat." They could not well have done so as long as they abode in Jerusalem, surrounded by a population of Jews to whom they were bound to give no needless offence. See my note upon it.

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

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things on earth or things in heaven" (Col. i. 20). Its application is two-fold. It first of all means that none of the creatures forbidden to be eaten by God in the Mosaical law as unclean, are henceforth to be accounted so, but all may be eaten freely as the gift of God. To take the most extreme case, swine may now be eaten without pollution, though even in the Evangelical prophet (Isaiah lxx. 4, lxxvi. 17,) the tasting of such meat is represented as abomination.

But the application of the principle goes much further than this, even upon the same lines: for what was God's purpose in forbidding the Israelites to eat the flesh of the creatures enumerated in Levit. xi.? Evidently to keep them separate from the heathen, so that they might not eat with them; for there was more danger in eating with them than in any other sort of intercourse. They never could be sure that the meat had been killed so as to let out all the blood, or that in its preparation that which came from unclean creatures had not been used. So that when God pronounced all creatures clean, he removed one of the principal barriers of exclusion between His own people and the Gentiles.

But, of course, the principal teaching is that the unclean creatures let down in the sheet are types of the Gentiles, so that the vision signifies that an act of cleansing had passed upon all mankind; henceforth the various races of men were no longer unclean, and to be cleansed only by circumcision and conformity to Judaism, but that each and every Gentile, if he repented of sin and believed the Gospel, could be admitted into the fellowship of Christ and made a member of His mystical Body at once, without passing through any Jewish gate of admission. Baptism, which implies admission into the highest and most mysterious state of blessing which God can bestow—for in it a man is made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven—is henceforth to be given to all that ask for it, for "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but He is all and in all."

16. "This was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven." The repetition of it three times is an assurance of the certainty of its teaching as from God, and of its speedy fulfilment. Thus in Genesis xli. 32, we read, "And for that the dream was

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 ¶ While Peter thought on the vision, <sup>k</sup> the <sup>k</sup> ch. xi. 12. Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 <sup>l</sup> Arise therefore, and get thee down, and <sup>l</sup> ch. xv. 7. go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

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19. "Three men seek thee." So M, A., C., E., 13, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac. B. reads "two men." D., H., L., P., read "men seek thee."

doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass."

17, 18. "Now while Peter doubted in himself . . . stood before the gate . . . were lodged there." He could hardly have doubted that it abrogated all distinction between clean and unclean meats, but he would naturally inquire in himself whether it had not a further significance, and God, whilst he pondered, gave the answer in a way little expected by him, for the men sent by Cornelius were below asking for him.

19, 20. "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him . . . I have sent them." "While Peter thought." This implies that it was no slight perplexity which troubled him, but deep thoughts, which would not be satisfied without a long and searching inquiry as to the meaning of the thrice-repeated vision.

"The Spirit said to him." In what way the Spirit thus spake—to what ear He addressed His words, we know not. I am inclined to think that there was a voice which reached the outward ears, or why should it be said so constantly that the Spirit spake rather than the Spirit inspired, or the Spirit secretly suggested, or the Spirit moved?

Besides the things which the Spirit said, "Behold three men seek thee," "go with them," "I have sent them," are not those which would arise in the heart, but would seem to be addressed from without, as the words of an angel. They are words, not of internal spiritual guidance, but of external direction.



21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

<sup>m</sup> ver. 1, 2, &c. 22 And they said, <sup>m</sup> Cornelius the centurion, a <sup>n</sup> ch. xxii. 12. just man, and one that feareth God, and <sup>n</sup> of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

“I have sent them.” Here the Holy Ghost speaks as if He were the Governor, Guide, and Ruler of the Church, and all around it. We shall, ere long, see the importance of paying due attention to this.

“Get thee down.” Probably by an outside staircase, so that he would meet the men, and tell them that he knew, in part, at least, their errand before they came into the house.

“Doubting nothing.” That is, though they are Gentiles and aliens. Do not go in a hesitating spirit, but yield thyself up without questioning to My guidance, even though I counsel thee to do strange unwonted things.

21. “Then Peter went down to the men . . . wherefore ye are come?” They would be astonished at finding that he knew of their coming, since it is evident that they had as yet delivered no message respecting their arrival. It is to be remarked how the knowledge which each party requires is only granted, as it were, by piecemeal. Peter sees the vision, and is told by the Spirit to meet those who were seeking him. Cornelius, also, sees the vision, and sends the messengers, but has no direct knowledge of the way of salvation till he receives it from the lips of Peter. All this seems to be for a twofold purpose—for St. Peter, that he may do what he is bidden to do in perfect faith; Cornelius, that he may know that the Revelation which he receives, which is to save his soul, is not a visionary matter, but received from him who was once the earthly companion, and now the accredited representative of the Son of God.

22. “And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man . . . hear words of thee.” Notice how they say only what is sufficient respecting the character of Cornelius to induce the Apostle to attend to their message. They say nothing respecting his prayers or alms-

23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, ° and certain ° ver. 45. brethren from Joppa accompanied him. oh. xi. 12.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

23. "Peter went away with them." Some MSS. omit "Peter," others read "He arose and went with them," or "Peter arose and went with them."

deeds, only that he was a just man, and one that feared God, the God of Israel (and so not an idolater), and that he was respected by St. Peter's own nation.

23. "Then called he them in, and lodged them . . . accompanied him." He tarried, of course, till the messengers of Cornelius had sufficiently rested, as it was thirty-six miles from Joppa to Cæsarea.

"Certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him." He took them with him as witnesses; for, in the first place, his own vision coinciding with that of Cornelius, showed that the matter was of extreme importance; and he also foresaw that such intercourse with Gentiles as he was about to have would probably be made, as indeed it turned out, a matter for inquiry. It is also to be noticed that he especially mentions the taking of these witnesses, and that he brought them to Jerusalem to confirm his words (xi. 12). There can be no doubt, taking into account the statement made in verse 45, that he acted under direct inspiration in taking them with him.

24. "And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea . . . near friends." This teaches us how earnest Cornelius had been in walking according to the light which he had. It appears from this that he had not kept the knowledge of the God of Israel to himself, but had made it known among his associates, so that a goodly number were gathered together to receive the further revelation which he was Divinely led to expect.

25, 26. "And as Peter was coming in . . . I myself also am a man." Peter instantly discerned that this worship on the part of

26 But Peter took him up, saying, <sup>p</sup> Stand up; I myself also am a man.

<sup>p</sup> ch. xiv. 14,  
15. Rev. xix.  
10. & xxii. 9.

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

<sup>q</sup> John iv. 9.  
& xviii. 28.  
ch. xi. 3. Gal.  
ii. 12, 14.

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

<sup>r</sup> ch. xv. 8, 9.  
Ephes. iii. 6.

Cornelius was beyond what was lawful to be paid by an inferior to his merely human superior; that there was "peril of idolatry;" and he instantly forbade it, as Paul and Barnabas rent their clothes when the people of Lystra were about to sacrifice to them (xiv. 14), and as the angel refused the worship of St. John with the words: "See thou do it not . . . I am thy fellow-servant . . . worship God" (Rev. xxii. 9.)

Protestant or anti-Romanist commentators, of course, draw the inference that, if St. Peter refused bodily prostrations, it is great arrogance in his supposed successor to allow his feet to be kissed. Cornelius à Lapide excuses the refusal of it by St. Peter: "humilitatis et modestiæ studio."

"Stand up; I myself also am a man." We are equal, for I worship the same God, and require the same redemption as you do.

27, 28. "And as he talked with him . . . I should not call any man common or unclean." Apparently Peter had not been slow to learn the whole lesson to be derived from his vision.

"An unlawful thing"—rather, perhaps, contrary to religious custom.

There was no *law* of God forbidding in so many words eating with Gentiles; but the whole spirit of the law was one of religious exclusion, so that at that time the Jews never eat with, and had as little communication as possible with Gentiles. Howson quotes Tacitus (Hist. v. 5): "Adversus omnes hostile odium, separati epulis, discreti cubilibus."

"That I should not call any man common or unclean"—the same words which he had applied to the animals in the vision.

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

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, <sup>a</sup> a man stood before me <sup>b</sup> in bright clothing,

31 And said, Cornelius, <sup>c</sup> thy prayer is heard, <sup>d</sup> and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

<sup>a</sup> ch. i. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxviii.

<sup>c</sup> Mark xvi. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Luke xxiv. 4.

<sup>e</sup> ver. iv. &c.

Dan. x. 12.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. vi. 10.

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30. "I was fasting." "Fasting" omitted by N, A., B., C., 27, 61, 81, 163, Vulg., Copt., Arm., Æth.; retained by A2 (D.), E., H. (L.), P. The readings of the first half of the verse are very confused; the Revisers give, "Four days ago until this hour I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house."

29. "Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying . . . ye have sent for me?" It appears from this that though he perceived clearly that God had abrogated all distinctions, yet he did not at once understand that he was to preach the Gospel to them, though, by direction of the angel, Cornelius had sent to him to "hear words of him."

30, 31. "And Cornelius said . . . sight of God." The reader will perceive that the difference of reading in this verse varies the sense much. The Revisers read: "Four days ago until this hour I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house," omitting all mention of fasting. Nothing is said in verses 3, 4, about fasting on the part of Cornelius, so that it seems safer to omit it; but if we take the words as they appear in the principal MSS., and are rendered in the last Revision, then the observance of the hours of prayer is brought out with singular emphasis. Still, however, it is to be remembered that, in several most important passages in this book, fasting is joined with prayer: thus, xiii. 2, 3; xiv. 23.

"A man stood before me." It has been ascribed to Cornelius' humility and modesty that he does not mention an angelic appearance: but, in several places in Scripture, angels are spoken of as men; thus Luke xxiv. 4. They seem to be distinguished from men rather by their brightness than by their wings, of which, as far as I can remember, no mention is made.

31. "And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms," &c. It is not "thy prayers," but "thy prayer." He had been pray-

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

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

32. "Who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee." Omitted by N, A, B., 3, 15, 18, 36, 61, 81, 93, 180, Vulg., Copt., Æth.; retained by C., D., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Arm., Sah., &c.

33. "Commanded thee of God." "God" read in D., F., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, &c.; "the Lord" in N, A., B., C., Vulg., Copt., &c.

ing, then, for guidance as to what was the true way of access to God. We cannot but gather from this that he felt the unsatisfactoriness of the Jewish religion, and perhaps the preaching of the great Prophet, and even the account of His Resurrection had reached his ears. Anyhow, this is certain, that if the revelation of the truths made to him by Peter was an answer to his prayers, his prayers must have been virtually supplications for fuller knowledge of God's truth.

32. "Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname," &c. Notice the precision with which Cornelius recounts the words of the angel, specifying everything. This was, of course, for the greater assurance of Peter and of them that were with him, that all things, even to the particular words of the angel, were ordered by God.

33. "Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done," &c. In these words there may be an allusion to the difficulties Peter had to surmount, and the scandal which Cornelius felt that it might occasion to the bigoted Pharisæical Jews. "No matter what can be said or urged thou hast done well in coming."

"Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things," &c. What serious attention and submissive faith are in these words. We are all present before God, as in His sight, as relying on His help, as waiting for His light.

"Commanded thee of God." God will, we believe, secretly charge thee what thou hast to say. He has guided me to send for

34 ¶ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said,  
 ' Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of  
 persons :

35 But \*in every nation he that feareth him,  
 and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

1 Deut. x. 17.  
 2 Chr. xiv. 7.  
 Job xxxiv. 19.  
 Rom. ii. 11.  
 Gal. ii. 6. Eph.  
 vi. 9. Col. iii.  
 25. 1 Pet. i.  
 17.  
 z ch. xv. 9.  
 Rom. ii. 13,  
 27. & iii. 22,  
 29. & x. 12, 13.  
 1 Cor. xii. 13.  
 Gal. iii. 28.  
 Eph. ii. 13, 18.  
 & iii. 6.

thee, and He has guided thee here, and in listening to  
 thee we are sure that we are listening to His Words.

34, 35. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive . . . accepted with him." These are the words of one to whom an old familiar truth has come in a new light, and with far greater power and wider application than before. The first idea of God which St. Peter had must have been that He is a just God. The law taught him that "the Lord his God is a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward." Very probably till this very day St. Peter had regarded this character of God as bearing only on His relation with the chosen people. He would regard God by His very nature as incapable of preferring one Jew before another, except for some moral or religious difference; but further than this he would probably not have thought of going. He knew that with respect to the revelation of His Love, God had made an enormous difference between his countrymen and the surrounding idolaters. He had given light to the one which He had not given to the other, and how far this apparent preference extended he knew not, and probably did not care even to contemplate; but now it has come upon him almost as a new revelation that God was in all respects, even in the relations of Jews to Gentiles, no respecter of persons; for Cornelius had been favoured with a vision exactly corresponding to his own.

"In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness," &c. The best comment on the significance of this saying is that of St. Paul. "If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?" (Rom. ii. 26, 27). What was the Jew's acceptance? Primarily his circumcision standing; and here the fulfilment of the law by the Gentiles is said to be equivalent to it. Some Divines

36 The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel,

have great trouble in reconciling this with the article respecting works done before Justification; but it is clear that the works alluded to in the article, whatever they be, cannot be such as Cornelius did, for it is expressly said that his works, before he had the Gospel preached to him, were acceptable—"thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God:" and with respect to professing Christians, we can never tell in any one case, whether any one work done by a seemingly unjustified man is done "before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit," for we cannot discern the depths of the soul, and so can never see the line in that soul where nature ends and grace begins. So that wherever we see any seeming good, even in unenlightened and ignorant men, we should thank God for it, and believe that the grace of Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit is there preparing the soul to receive further light and higher grace. Anyhow, it is most dangerous to pronounce respecting any manifest doing of what is right, that it is sinful; for by so doing we confound the distinction between good and evil, and so do what we can to upset God's moral government, and for anything that we know we may be pronouncing that to be evil which is wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God.

36. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace," &c. The construction of this and of the two following verses is involved and broken, but the authorized version gives a meaning sufficiently clear for the general reader, and the revised gives substantially the same.

"The word which (God) sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace," &c. The word here means the Gospel—that, in fact, which Peter proclaims in verses 38-43. Some think the word to be the Personal Word, the Logos; but it is impossible to suppose that Peter *began* his preaching with an abstruse and philosophical term, of which a Roman centurion would be wholly unable to grasp the meaning.

The word was the message respecting what Christ did and suffered for mankind. This was sent to the children of Israel (to the Jew first), and it was emphatically the proclamation of peace through Jesus Christ, peace with God, peace with one another, and, as a consequence of these two, peace in ourselves.

<sup>a</sup> preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (<sup>b</sup> he is Lord of all:)

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

38 How <sup>d</sup> God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with

<sup>a</sup> Is. lvii. 19.  
Ephes. ii. 14,  
16, 17. Col. i.  
20.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxviii.  
28. Rom. x.  
12. 1 Cor.  
xv. 27. Eph.  
i. 20, 22. 1  
Pet. iii. 22.  
Rev. xvii. 14.  
& xix. 16.

<sup>c</sup> Luke iv. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Luke iv.  
ch. ii. 22, &  
iv. 27. Heb.  
i. 9.

38. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost," &c. The Revisers seem to adhere more closely to the idiom of the original when they render it "even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost," &c.

"He is Lord of all." Here is a confession of the Lord's divine power and rule thrown in, as it were, by the way. He was no mere teacher—no mere preacher—no mere prophet or worker of miracles even. He was Lord of all, Jews and Gentiles. God had put all things under His feet.

37. "That word, *I say*, ye know." No one living in Palestine at the time of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Lord, or the first preaching of the Apostles, could fail to know that a religious movement was going on which shook Jewish society to its foundations, and which, in its leading facts respecting Christ's Death and Resurrection, was known to the government, the magistrates, and the soldiery which constituted the power of the Roman occupation. Cornelius, and those with him, must have heard many things respecting Jesus of Nazareth. If he had lived but a short time in Judæa, we should think that he must have come in contact with some, rather with many, who had heard Him and His apostles preach, and had seen miracles done by Him—perhaps they, or some of their friends had been healed by Him. The Lord's works were not done in a corner; the rumour of them at times had filled the land. The great ones affected to be ignorant, but it was all affectation; they were in reality deeply concerned, for it was hard for them, as it was for one of their leaders, "to kick against the pricks."

Shortly after the Lord's baptism and temptation He began His Galilean ministry, and St. Luke notices the sensation which it made: "There went out a fame of Him through all the region round about."

38. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." This does not, I think, refer to the descent of



the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; <sup>e</sup> for God

<sup>e</sup> John iii. 2. was with him.

<sup>f</sup> ch. ii. 32. 39 And <sup>f</sup> we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; <sup>g</sup> whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

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39. "Whom they slew and hanged on a tree;" rather, "whom they slew, hanging him on a tree."

the Holy Ghost upon the Lord at His Baptism—it is very improbable that Cornelius and his friends could have heard of that—but to the power which wrought His mighty works, and the wisdom with which He spake.

"With the Holy Ghost and with power," does not mean exactly with the power of the Holy Ghost, but rather with the Holy Ghost Himself Who is the Spirit and Power of God.

"Who went about doing good." This is the best and truest description of the Lord's life on earth. So unceasingly was He employed in teaching, and preaching, and working miracles that at times He and they that were with Him had "no leisure so much as to eat."

"And healing all that were oppressed of the devil." This must not be confined to the ejection of evil spirits, but has to do with all the works of evil. Darkness and ignorance He dispelled by His light, for He was the light of the world, and in the healing of ordinary diseases He unloosed those whom Satan had bound (Luke xiii. 16).

"God was with him," that is, in His human nature and human life. "With the finger of God I cast out devils." "The Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works" (John xiv. 10). In no case was there any separate action. In no case was there an independent power as of two Gods.

39. "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem." This seems to imply a ministry in Jerusalem of far greater length and importance than that mentioned in the Synoptics, and points to the works done in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, which are only given in St. John's Gospel.

"Whom they slew and hanged on a tree."

40 Him <sup>a</sup> God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41 <sup>1</sup> Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, <sup>k</sup> who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And <sup>1</sup> he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify <sup>m</sup> that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge <sup>n</sup> of quick and dead.

<sup>b</sup> ch. ii. 24.  
<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 17,  
 22. ch. xiii. 31.  
<sup>k</sup> Luke xxiv.  
 30, 43. John  
 xxi. 13.  
<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii.  
 19, 20. ch.  
 i. 8.  
<sup>m</sup> John v. 23,  
 27. ch. xvii.  
 31.  
<sup>n</sup> Rom. xiv. 9,  
 10. 2 Cor.  
 v. 10. 2 Tim.  
 iv. 1. 1 Pet.  
 iv. 5.

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40. "And shewed him openly;" rather, "and gave him to be made manifest."

40. "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly." Not, that is, in a vision; but openly, *i. e.*, so that he should be seen with the bodily eye, and felt, and handled.

41. "Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God." It is here to be noticed how St. Peter, instead of exaggerating the evidences of the Resurrection, at once acknowledges that the Lord only appeared to chosen witnesses, which witnesses were those who knew Him best, and would vouch for the identity of His Risen Body with the Body which had been crucified. If He had appeared to all the people, a multitude would have said that it was not the same Jesus; and their testimony would have been taken as counterbalancing that of the chosen witnesses who had known Him from the beginning. Now the evidence for the Lord's Resurrection was twofold. It was, first of all, the mighty works done by obscure men, such as Peter and John, and then their witness to having seen the Lord after He was risen; and this alone would explain how such men were able to do such mighty works.

42, 43. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify," &c. He commanded us, *i. e.*, when He said, "Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and when He said, "Go ye to all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

"And to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Compare with this the words of St. Paul to the people of Athens: "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he

° Is. liii. 11.

Jer. xxxi. 34.

Dan. ix. 24.

Mic. vii. 18.

Zech. xiii. 1.

Mal. iv. 2.

ch. xxvi. 22.

P ch. xv. 9.

& xxvi. 18.

Ro. x. 11. Gal.

iii. 22.

q ch. iv. 31.

& viii. 15, 16,

17. & xi. 15.

43 ° To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name <sup>p</sup>whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, <sup>q</sup> the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31).

"To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him." This does not of course mean that every minor prophet has a distinct enunciation of forgiveness through the Messiah, but that all the leading ones have. So Isaiah liii., Jeremiah xxxi. 34, Ezekiel xxxvii. 25, Daniel ix. 24, Hosea xiv., Joel iii. 21, Micah vii. 18, Mal. iv. 2.

"Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Here we have as clear an enunciation of salvation by grace through faith as is to be found in all Scripture. It contains in one verse what St. Paul expands in many in his address or sermon in chap. xiii.

There are in the Acts four sermons or addresses of Apostles to those yet in a state of unbelief or inquiry: that of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost; that of St. Peter here; that of St. Paul in the synagogue at Antioch, in Pisidia; and that of St. Paul at Athens. And they are remarkable in that they all agree in setting forth an historical Gospel—a Gospel not based on abstract ideas of atonement, or calling, or election, or justification, but on Christ Incarnate, Crucified, Risen, and Ascended: in fact, on the Gospel as set forth in the Creeds. Two of them—that of St. Peter to Cornelius, and that of St. Paul at Athens—set forth, very emphatically indeed, Christ as the Judge of quick and dead, and this, of course, not to frighten or repel, but to convince of sin, and conviction of sin is the one preparation for forgiveness.

44. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them," &c. So this day was, as it were, a second Pentecost: "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." The descent of the Holy Ghost was not to bring about a moral change, for that was already done, or at least begun—for those assembled

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, <sup>1</sup> because <sup>2</sup> ver. 23. that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift <sup>3</sup> Gal. iii. 14. of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not

were, like Cornelius, "devout men," fearing God, and looking for further light—but to demonstrate visibly, or at least audibly, that these Gentiles were, without circumcision, or any promise to conform to Judaism, to be admitted at once into "the mystical Body of God's Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." It was to show that they were marked by God to receive on their own proper Gentile standing the greatest benefit which the children of men can receive, to be grafted into the Body of Christ. Cornelius à Lape and others suppose that the tongues of fire rested upon them as they had done on the Apostles at the beginning, because St. Peter says, "Forasmuch as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us;" but I think that if this visible appearance had taken place, it would have been mentioned even before the tongues; the only manifestation is that of speech—

"They spake with tongues, and magnified God." This manifestation apparently took place not so much for the satisfaction of St. Peter, as of "those that were with him." "They of the circumcision which believed," *i.e.*, those whom St. Peter had taken with him, "were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."

"They of the circumcision were astonished." The word "astonished" is too feeble. The word signifies "were moved out of themselves, were beside themselves with amazement." It is the same word as is used by St. Paul in 2 Cor. v. 13, "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God."

46. "For they heard them speak with tongues." Did the hearers understand these tongues? It is not improbable that in part they did. They would be certain that what they heard were not unintelligible sounds.

"Then answered Peter,—

47. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized,

be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost 'as well

' ch. xi. 17. as we ?  
& xv. 8. 9.  
Rom. x. 12.

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which have received the Holy Ghost?" The gift of the Holy Ghost which had been given to them was, as I have said, designed to mark them out as intended by God to be incorporated into His Son's Body, and apparently for no other purpose. Whether the gift of tongues continued with them, and they went forth to preach to men of other tongues, we are not told. The purpose seems to have been a temporary one, that they as Gentiles should be received into the Church of Christ; and it was one which so soon after the great Pentecostal effusion could not be gainsaid, nor its significance misunderstood.

An extraordinary use has been made of this incident to disparage baptism as a sacrament of the Gospel. It has been said (by Dean Howson in "A Popular Commentary on the New Testament") that the highest blessing of all, the Holy Spirit, had been received, hence the minor gift which was emblematical of the other, and which procured admission into the Church of Christ, could not be refused. Again, Bishop Ryle perpetually in his tracts refers to this as showing that the inward grace is given by God independently of the outward sign—and if in this case then usually.

But surely the inward grace of Baptism is not the gift of tongues, or any other gift except that most unique one of Incorporation into Christ, and this is by the gift, or rather action of the Spirit in this Sacrament. So says the Apostle, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." And so says the Church when she teaches her children to say, "My baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ."

In the baptism of adults there must always be a previous action of the Spirit in the heart, or the Sacrament would be profaned. In the heathen there must be a renunciation of past idolatries and other sins of the heathen state, and this cannot come from themselves, it must come from God by His Spirit. And in persons of mature age, whose infant baptism has been neglected, there must be a desire to receive the benefits of the Sacrament, which desire must come from the inward working of the Spirit of God, but not till such persons are baptized are they "born of water and of the Spirit into the kingdom of God."

It is but fair to Dr. Howson to state that he proceeds to say,

48 "And he commanded them to be baptized \* in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry <sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. i. 17. certain days. <sup>x</sup> ch. ii. 38. & viii. 16.

48. "In the name of the Lord." So H., L., P., most Cursives; but M., A., B., E., many Cursives, Vulg. (Amiat.), Sah., Copt., Syriac, Arm., read "in the name of Jesus Christ."

"Moreover, there is a strong testimony here to the importance of baptism. On the one hand nothing can be more emphatic than this narrative in its assertion that God can confer His highest spiritual gifts, irrespective of all ordinances; but, on the other, it is asserted with equal emphasis, that divinely-appointed ordinances are not to be disregarded."

This is good as far as it goes; but it suggests two questions. How is it possible to call the gift of tongues "God's highest spiritual gift"? and then, if the highest spiritual gifts are conferred before baptism, why should one who had received them be baptized? It becomes in his case a mere unmeaning ceremony, a Jewish ordinance, which has only an outward form. But there are no mere forms in Christianity. All its external things are "outward visible signs of inward spiritual grace given unto us."

48. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Peter apparently did not baptize them himself, but caused that they should be baptized by others, presbyters, or deacons. In this he acted as St. Paul did, who did not himself baptize personally, lest any should say that he baptized in his own name.

"Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." It is implied that he did so; the vision which he had received had completely dissipated all scruples. This prolonged stay was no doubt the chief cause of offence in the eyes of "them of the circumcision."

## CHAP. XL

**A**ND the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, <sup>a</sup> they that were of the circumcision contended with him,  
a ch. x. 45.  
Gal. ii. 12.  
 3 Saying, <sup>b</sup>Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, <sup>c</sup>and didst eat with them.  
b ch. x. 28.  
c Gal. ii. 12.

1. "And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard," &c. It is not said that they heard it gladly. They had not as yet been prepared for it by the account of the circumstances under which it had taken place, and the verse sounds as if the greater part reserved their judgment of the matter.

2. "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision," &c. "They of the circumcision." They were all circumcised Jews, so this must mean—they who considered circumcision of such supreme importance, that all who were uncircumcised were, even after their baptism, legally unclean.

"Contended with him." If St. Peter had been from the first held to be infallible and the "Prince of the Apostles," his action in the matter never could have been disputed.

3. "Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." The accusation is remarkable, for it is not "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst cause them to be baptized," but "thou didst eat with them." Very probably these "men of the circumcision" assumed that the newly baptized Gentiles would, as a matter of course, be immediately circumcised, and so become to all intents and purposes Jewish proselytes, but at present they regarded them as in their uncleanness, and considered that Peter had gone contrary to the law, and himself contracted ceremonial uncleanness by eating with them.

4. "But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and ex-

4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded it <sup>d</sup> by order unto them, saying, <sup>d</sup> Luke i. 3.

5 <sup>e</sup> I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in <sup>e</sup> <sup>e</sup> ch. x. 9, &c. a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

pounded it by order," &c. Notice that this foremost Apostle, instead of asserting his Apostolic inspiration, still less his infallibility, at once entered into the whole matter as if they had a right to a full explanation of a thing which went so counter to all their prejudices.

This explanation is given in full by the Evangelist, notwithstanding that in giving it he goes over the same ground, and almost entirely in the same words. The slight differences, however, are not unimportant, as they serve to bring out with greater vividness the impression made upon the Apostle by the vision.

5. "I was in the city of Joppa praying." He does not mention in what house he was, that he had fasted till a certain hour, and was hungry, and probably faint with hunger, but simply that he was "praying;" for, if in prayer when these events began to take place, then he was the more certain of Divine Guidance.

"And in a trance I saw a vision . . . it came even unto me." St. Peter seems here to call to mind the nearness of its approach, as if he regarded it with some degree of awe. In chap. x. 11 the words "unto him" are very doubtful—"and the sheet was let down to the earth." Putting the two accounts together, it seems as if the sheet was let completely down, and then came forward to him.

6. "Upon which when I had fastened mine eyes I considered and saw," &c. This denotes much more wrapt attention on the part of St. Peter than the parallel account in chap. x. 11-13.

7-10. "And I heard a voice saying unto me . . . drawn up again into heaven." Notice that the voice answered again from heaven.



8 But I said, Not so, Lord : for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times : and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me.

<sup>f</sup> John xvi. 13.  
ch. x. 19. &  
xv. 7.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. x. 23.

12 And <sup>f</sup>the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover <sup>g</sup>these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house :

<sup>h</sup> ch. x. 30.

13 <sup>h</sup>And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter ;

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11. "Where I was." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Æth. ; but N, A., B., D., read "where we were."

This emphasizes the voice as coming from the Lord more than in the first account.

11-13. "And behold immediately there were three men . . . he shewed us . . . whose surname is Peter." Peter, of course, commences his account with the vision which he had himself seen, and now he shows, in briefer words than those of the Evangelist, the coincidence of the arrival of the messengers, and of the words of the Spirit of God which taught him that the vision was sent to give him confidence in accompanying them to the house of a Gentile, nothing doubting or hesitating, or, perhaps, if we adopt another reading, making no distinction or difference. He was to go with the same confidence as if he had been invited to the house of a Jew.

"Moreover these six brethren accompanied me." Such was the importance of the matter, that he not only took the six witnesses with him to the house of Cornelius, but had also brought them with him to Jerusalem to confirm his words respecting what had occurred in the house.

14. "Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, 'as on us at the beginning.

<sup>l</sup> ch. ii. 4.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, <sup>k</sup> John indeed baptized with water; but <sup>l</sup> ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. iii. 11.  
<sup>l</sup> John i. 28, 33.  
ch. i. 5. &  
xix. 4.

17 <sup>m</sup> Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>n</sup> what was I, that I could withstand God?

<sup>l</sup> Is. xlv. 3.  
<sup>l</sup> Joel ii. 28. &  
iii. 18.  
<sup>m</sup> ch. xv. 8. 9.  
<sup>n</sup> ch. x. 47.

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace,

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be saved." This is not expressed in St. Luke's narrative. In the first account (x. 6) it is, "Who shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do;" but the words are doubtful. In the account given by the messengers of Cornelius to St. Peter, it is simply "to hear words of thee" (x. 22), in the account given by Cornelius himself it is, "Who when he cometh shall speak unto thee."

But words from God to sinners must be words of salvation, *i. e.*, words of reconciliation, words of justification, and words full of promise of deliverance from sin, and power and grace to do the will of God.

15. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us," &c. "As I began to speak." In the first account it is, "While Peter yet spake these words," but the few words which St. Peter is said to have spoken could only have been a beginning. They contain no directions as to what the Gentiles were to do.

16, 17. "Then remembered I the word of the Lord . . . what was I that I could withstand God?" He would have withstood God if he had refused Baptism till they had been circumcised, or if he had treated them as yet unclean by declining to sojourn and eat with them.

18. "When they heard these things . . . granted repentance unto life." Astonishing prejudice! as if when the Son of God had been crucified, and risen again, there could be any difficulty about the salvation of the race. And yet it is inherent in the human heart,

and glorified God, saying, °Then hath God also to the Gen-  
tiles granted repentance unto life.

° Rom. x. 12,  
13. & xv. 9, 16.  
P ch. viii. 1.

19 ¶ P Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene,

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for who of any pre-eminence desires that his distinctive honours should be abolished by other men being raised to his own level? It is human nature, but He Who came to renew that nature, "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." Notice what a place is here given to repentance. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted"—salvation? no, "repentance unto life," without which there can be no salvation.

19. "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen." There is no fixed date of the events in these three verses. The statement in verse 19 may cover many years—in fact, from A.D. 34 to 41, but verse 20 suggests an important question which we shall have to consider carefully.

Phenice, that is, Phœnicia—Cyprus, the country of Barnabas, who, however, seems to have continued with the Apostles in Jerusalem.

"And Antioch." This is the first mention of the great city in which the first Gentile Church was founded. Antioch had a Greek origin, being founded 300 years before Christ by Seleucus Nicator. It grew under the Seleucid Kings till it became a place of great extent and remarkable beauty. It was made a free city by Pompey, and was further adorned with magnificent buildings by the early emperors. Jews were settled there in large numbers, and were, as in Damascus, governed by their own ethnarch, and allowed to have the same privileges with the Greeks. (Smith's Dictionary.)

"Preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only." There must be some reason for this assertion, and one only seems plausible which we shall consider in our examination of the disputed reading in the next verse.

20. "And some of them were men . . . spake unto the Grecians [or Greeks] preaching the Lord Jesus." Cyprus and Cyrene had each of them a very large and important colony of Jews, but why

which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto <sup>q</sup> the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

<sup>q</sup> ch. vi. 1. &  
ix. 29.

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30. "Unto the Grecians." So B., D<sup>2</sup>., E., H., L., P., 81, almost all Cursives; but "to the Greeks" read by A., D<sup>1</sup>., Arm. (N<sup>8</sup>, *miro vitio, εὐαγγελίζοντας*, Tischendorf).

they should have been forward in the missionary work beyond other Jews it is impossible to say. Among the Cyrenians there may have been some fruit of Stephen's work, and some of those of Cyprus might have been influenced by Barnabas.

And now we come to the vexed question of the reading in the latter part of this verse—whether it should be Hellenists, and if so, Jews only though speaking Greek,—or Hellenes, and if so, Gentiles uncircumcised like Cornelius, though they may have cast aside the worship of false Gods.

The evidence for the two readings is nearly equally balanced. The evidence for Hellenists being B., E., H., L., P., among Uncials, and most Cursives; for Hellenes or Gentiles being, A., D., and quotations in Eusebius and Chrysostom.

Internal considerations, however, seem entirely in favour of Hellenes or Gentiles. For, first of all, there is evidently intended to be the record of an advance in the progress of the Gospel, and there would be none if we read "Hellenists," for Hellenists were evangelized on the Day of Pentecost, and the Deacons from their names seem all to have been foreign Jews. All the Jews living permanently in foreign cities would be of the nature of Hellenists. Reason, then, and common-sense seem to be on the side of the reading which gives the record of advance. The only objection is that the conversion of Cornelius in the last chapter seems to be the first instance of the reception of a Gentile, as such, into the Church; and St. Peter indeed claims it to be such in xv. 7; but the preaching to the Hellenes here may be, for ought we know, subsequent to the reception of Cornelius, and consequent upon it; these Cyrenians and Cypriots having heard of it perceived at once its very great significance, and acted upon it without delay.

But it may be that the two events took place about the same time, and, if so, then the preaching to Gentiles at Antioch is recorded here because the action of St. Peter at Cæsarea had prepared the way for its acknowledgment by the Church at Jerusalem. If it had come to the ears of the Church at Jerusalem that unknown

21 And <sup>r</sup> the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and <sup>s</sup> turned unto the Lord.

<sup>r</sup> Luke i. 66.  
ch. ii. 47.

<sup>s</sup> ch. ix. 35.

A. D. 42.

<sup>t</sup> ch. ix. 27

22 ¶ Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth <sup>t</sup> Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

<sup>u</sup> ch. xiii. 43.  
& xiv. 22.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and <sup>u</sup> exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

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22. "That he should go." So D., E., H., L., P., most Cursives; but omitted by N, A., B., Vulg., Syriac, Copt., Arm., Æth.

men of Cyprus and Cyrene, had taken upon themselves to treat the Gentiles as if God had cleansed them, their action would have been at once repudiated, and they themselves, perhaps, cast out of the Church; but as the news of the Antioch missionary work came close after the account given by St. Peter of what God had led him to do, the mouths of Judaizing gainsayers were shut, and the Church, as such, welcomed the good tidings.

21. "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed," &c. No doubt this expression "the hand of the Lord," denotes that many miracles and signs were done in confirmation of the faith preached.

"Turned unto the Lord," *i. e.*, turned in faith to Jesus as the Lord. Turning to the Lord, *i. e.*, the Lord Jesus, is equivalent to turning to God.

22. "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was," &c. The sending of Barnabas is parallel to that of Peter and John in Acts viii. to the Samaritan converts. It shows that Barnabas was recognized as an Apostle.

23, 24. "Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad . . . added unto the Lord. This seems to imply that he had no remains of Jewish prejudice whatsoever, and rejoiced at the work of God, though it took place mainly among Gentiles, and bethought the breaking down of all barriers, and the abolition before God of all distinctions between Jew and Gentile.

24 For he was a good man, and \*full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: †and much people was added unto the Lord.

\* ch. vi. 5.  
† ver. 21. ch.  
v. 14.

25 Then departed Barnabas to \*Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

A.D. 43.  
\* ch. ix. 30.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they

“And exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.” He was named by the Apostle “son of Paraklesis,” which signifies exhortation as well as comfort. In accordance with this his name, he exhorted them all that “with purpose of heart,” that is, determination, they should cleave unto the Lord. “He that endureth unto the end the same shall be saved.” “To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality (God will give) eternal life” (Rom. ii. 7).

“He was a good man,” not good in the sense of being just and virtuous merely, but good in the sense of being benevolent, sympathizing, candid, helpful, encouraging. The observation of Bishop Wordsworth is worth transcribing. “This praise of Barnabas is remarkable. It is not usual for evangelists and apostles to praise one another. There must be some special reason: as for that in xv. 26, and II. Peter, iii. 15. The reason, probably, was this,—St. Luke, the author of the Acts, was the friend and companion of St. Paul; and he has related the circumstances of the *παροξυσμός* and consequent separation of Paul and Barnabas. It might, perhaps, be supposed that St. Luke—the friend of St. Paul—was prepossessed in his favour, and was prejudiced against Barnabas. There is something, therefore, very appropriate and interesting in this graceful tribute to Barnabas from St. Luke, ‘He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.’”

25. “Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul.” He had before brought Paul to the Apostles (ix. 27). Now, knowing his Apostolic gifts, and his aptitude for the work, he sought him out to assist in founding the first Gentile Church.

26. “And when he had found him he brought him unto Antioch.” This seems to imply that there was some difficulty in finding him. He had, probably, gone to preach in the country districts of the province.

assembled themselves || with the church, and taught much  
 | Or, in the people. And the disciples were called Christians  
 church. first in Antioch.

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“And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” This name could only have been given them by Gentiles—*i.e.*, given to them so that it should attach itself to them, and be used to designate them by friends and foes alike. For the Jews who believed in and expected the Christ would not call them by a name which seemed to acknowledge their Founder as the Messiah, or Christ. They would rather call them Nazarenes. To the Gentiles, however, the name of Christ would be a matter of indifference. They preached and professed to obey One Whom they called Christ, and so in the first Gentile Church they would receive the name. They had hitherto had no distinctive name embodying that of their founder in it. They were the brethren (ix. 30), the saints (ix. 32), believers (v. 14), disciples (ix. 26), but not till now Christians. It has been noticed that its form shews it to be of Latin origin, *anus* being a Latin termination. It has also been noticed that a heathen writer (Julian in his “Misopogon”) speaks of the low population of Antioch as accustomed to give scurrilous nicknames, but this seems absurd if called in to explain the fact of their receiving this name of Christian at Antioch, for it is in no respect a nickname, and they received it at Antioch because in that city first of all the Church appeared in a large centre of heathenism as a body distinct from the Jews. They must soon have some distinctive name, and the name is the most appropriate name, and Antioch the most likely place in which they could receive it. The term is very sparingly used in the New Testament. Once by St. Peter, I. Epis. iv. 16, where it is connected with their vocation of suffering for the sake of Christ: “If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on that behalf.” It is never used by St. Paul himself—but once in his hearing by Herod Agrippa, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”

It is the highest of all names. “Well, he *is* a Christian,” is only said of one in whom the holy, loving character has become very conspicuous.

27 ¶ And in these days came <sup>a</sup> prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

<sup>a</sup> ch. ii. 17. & xiii. 1. & xv. 32. & xxi. 9.  
1 Cor. xii. 28.  
Eph. iv. 11.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. xxi. 10.

28 And there stood up one of them named <sup>b</sup> Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.

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28. "Claudius Cæsar." "Cæsar" omitted by N, A., B., D., 13, 40, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Arm., Æth.; retained by E., H., L., P., most Cursives and Syriac.

27. "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch." That is while Paul and Barnabas assembled with the Church and taught.

"Prophets." We shall shortly have to notice the functions of these prophets. It is an interesting question whether they were sent by the Church at Jerusalem for the instruction and edification of the youthful church of Antioch, or whether they were sent expressly by the Spirit. I incline to the latter.

28. "And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit." This was, no doubt, in the mind of the Spirit the reason for the mission. The collection throughout the Gentile Church for the poor saints at Jerusalem forms so important a feature in the Pauline Epistles, and had no doubt so beneficial an influence in knitting together in love the circumcision and uncircumcision, that the inauguration of it in Antioch seems quite worthy of a special mission.

"Great dearth throughout the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar." Not only Judæa, but all the known world was afflicted with famines during his reign, *i.e.*, from A.D. 41 to 54. This dearth was not universal at the same time, but raged at different times in different parts of the empire. "Roman historians mention four great famines, which they place in his second, fourth, tenth, and eleventh years (Dio. Cass. Hist. lx., Tacit. Ann. xii. 43, Sueton. Claud. 28, Orosius vii.). In Judæa there was a very severe famine lasting for two, and, perhaps, for three years (A.D. 45-47): beginning soon after the death of Herod Agrippa, mentioned in the next chapter, while Cuspius Fadus was Procurator of the Province, and going on during the time of Tiberius Alexander his successor" (Blunt, from Josephus). This latter famine was



29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa :

<sup>c</sup> Rom. xv. 26.

<sup>1</sup> Cor. xvi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cor. ix. 1.

<sup>d</sup> ch. xii. 25.

A. D. 44.

30 <sup>d</sup> Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

the one in which the Jews were relieved by Helena, which I have alluded to in my note on page 51.

“Which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.” This seems to show that the prophecy respecting the famine was delivered before the death of Caligula and the accession of Claudius, and is a landmark, as it were, in ascertaining the chronology of this book.

29. “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief,” &c. “According to his ability.” This seems to show that the community of goods (for apparently the inspiration of the Spirit acting on different hearts in the Church of Jerusalem had moved them to sell all their possessions and goods,) was not imposed upon the Gentile Churches. I have given reasons why it should have been confined to Judæa (page 50).

“Determined to send relief unto the brethren.” They did this at the word of Agabus, as a prophet under the inspiration of the Spirit, before the famine actually broke out, thereby showing their faith in what was undoubtedly a message from God, and their charity, which looked far ahead, and endeavoured to mitigate the want before it actually overtook their brethren in Judæa.

30. “Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” Was it sent to the elders because the Apostles were all of them absent from Jerusalem? I think not, but for this reason: the Apostles had deliberately, and in the most solemn way, put from themselves the distribution of funds for the relief of the poor, and so this was naturally sent to ministers under them, as the Presbyters. If it be asked, Why not to the deacons, specially set apart for the distribution of alms? we answer, These Deacons, as they are called, were appointed not to superintend the general distribution of the alms of the Church, but for a very special purpose, arising out of the complaint of the Hellenistic Christian Jews respecting the neglect of their widows.

Were these Presbyters here mentioned an order? Most probably, but into that we must look further on in this exposition.

## CHAP. XII.

NOW about that time Herod the king || stretched forth  
*his* hands to vex certain of the church. | Or, *began*.

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

1. "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands," &c. This was Herod Agrippa the First, the son of Aristobulus (who was murdered by his father, Herod the Great), and Bernice. He was called Agrippa in compliment to the great statesman of Augustus, and was sent to Rome very early, where he was brought up in the imperial court, and was on intimate terms with the future emperors, Caligula and Claudius. He fell under the jealous suspicion of Tiberius, and was shut up in prison till the tyrant's death. After this his fortunes changed when Caligula came to the purple. The emperor gave him the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, to which after the disgrace of Herod Antipas *his* dominions were added, so that he ruled with the title of king over all the countries possessed by his grandfather. He befriended the Jews by doing his utmost to prevent Caligula from erecting his statue in the temple, and was successful, and when he came to Judæa professed himself a devout Jew. According to Josephus, he loved to live continually in Jerusalem, and was exactly careful in the observance of the laws of his country. He therefore kept himself entirely pure, nor did any day pass over his head without its appointed sacrifice. ("Antiquities," xix. ch. vii., sect. 3.)

But seeing that if he was to maintain his popularity with the Jews he must do his best vigorously to extirpate the new sect, he at once struck at the heads of the Church, and so we read,

2. "And he killed James the brother of John with the sword." Why did he first strike at this Apostle? Because evidently he was the most earnest and zealous in preaching the Gospel, and so he was the most obnoxious to the Jews. The reader will remember how the Lord gave to him and his brother, St. John, the name of "Sons of Thunder." A remarkable circumstance is preserved to

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

<sup>c</sup> John xxi. 18. 4 And <sup>a</sup> when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of sol-

us by Eusebius respecting his death. "Of this James, Clement adds a narrative worthy of note in the seventh book of his 'Institutions,' evidently recording it according to the tradition he had received from his ancestors. He says that the man who led him to the judgment seat, seeing him bearing his testimony to the faith, and moved by the fact, confessed himself a Christian. Both, therefore, were led away to die. On their way he entreated James to be forgiven of him, and James, considering a little, replied, 'Peace be to thee,' and kissed him; and they both were beheaded at the same time" ("Eccles. Hist." ii. 9).

3. "And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also." He evidently intended to destroy all the leading Christians for mere popularity's sake; and yet this man is represented by Josephus as a humane and considerate man (see Ant. xix. ch. vii. 3, 4).

"Then were the days of unleavened bread." This seems to be put in to explain why there was any delay in slaying him as soon as he was apprehended. James was probably martyred just before the Passover, and Peter was put in prison immediately afterwards, through fear lest he should flee from the city; but it being Passover-tide, he was kept in prison till after the conclusion of the feast.

4. "And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison." "Four quaternions of soldiers," *i. e.*, four bands of four, who were to relieve one another, so that the prisoner should be always guarded by four, two at the outside of the locked door of the cell or ward, and one on each side of him, to each of whom he was fastened by a separate chain, locked around his wrists. Why were such extraordinary precautions taken, for the way in which they are mentioned betokens that the guard was unusually strong? I cannot help thinking that they remembered the former escape (ch. v. 18), and so endeavoured to make any such accident, as they deemed it to have been, impossible. It cannot be supposed that every prisoner in a Roman prison had sixteen soldiers to guard him.

diers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but || prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

|| Or, *instant and earnest prayer was made,*  
2 Cor. i. 11.  
Eph. vi. 18,  
1 Thess. v. 17.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And, behold, <sup>d</sup>the angel of the Lord came <sup>d</sup> ch. v. 19.

“After Easter.” This should be rendered “after the Passover;” the translation, Easter, is misleading.

5. “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing,” &c. This unceasing prayer was not only prompted and sustained by their affection for the Apostle, but by the needs of the Church; for very probably few, if any, of the Apostles were left; all were dispersed, and Paul was not yet well known, much less recognized as an Apostle, so that Peter was, of necessity, the centre of unity to the infant Church.

“Without ceasing,” *i. e.*, no doubt, uninterrupted night and day, as well as earnest and fervent.

6. “And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping.” “He who can *sleep* in such circumstances as these shows plainly the extraordinary peace and tranquillity of his mind in the greatest dangers, his exceeding contempt of life, and his firm trust and confidence in God.” (Quesnel.) Peter must have known that the same death awaited him, as had carried off his brother Apostle.

“Sleeping between two soldiers, bound,” &c. Everything was done to make his escape impossible. He could not move without disturbing the slumbers of two soldiers, lying close beside him. The door of his cell was locked, and on the outside were two soldiers more, and there were perhaps some other gates, all guarded, to be passed.

7. “And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison.” Did this light proceed from the angel, or was it some other supernatural light which God caused to shine?

upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind

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Most probably the former, as the angels are constantly represented as appearing in shining garments. But has not a light more heavenly even than this shone in the darkest prison—shone into the spirit of him who was there immured for righteousness' sake, and illuminated with the light of God's own truth and love past trials of faith and forgotten promises, and brought to mind with startling vividness the memories of those who have suffered like things for the glory of God?

“The free grace of God is that light which can break into the darkest dungeon, from which all other lights and comforts are shut out; and without this, all other enjoyments are what the world would be without the sun: nothing but darkness.” (Archbishop Leighton, quoted in Ford.)

“And he smote . . . . And his chains fell off from his hands.” Apparently this was done very quietly and silently. God's hand must not be seen.

Quesnel shows a typical aspect of this miracle wonderfully well. “That which passes here may be considered as a representation of that assistance which God, either by means of His grace, or of a guardian angel, is pleased to give a person, who lies, as it were, fast asleep in the darkness and the chains of sin, and under the power of the devil. He enlightens, awakens, and raises him up from sleep. He causes the chains to fall off from his hands, which hindered him from lifting them up to heaven in prayer, from stretching them out to the poor in alms, and from performing works of repentance, humility, and charity.”

“His chains fell off from his hands.” No doubt each chain was locked at the end around each wrist, and that which fastened the wrists of the Apostle was supernaturally unlocked, so that when the soldiers awoke they would find the chains fastened to their hands.

8. “And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals,” &c. He had naturally loosened his inner garments before beginning to sleep. Now he was bidden to gird them closer to him, as preparing for a journey.

on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and <sup>e</sup> wist not that it was true which was done by the angel: but <sup>o</sup> Ps. cxxvi. 1. thought <sup>f</sup> he saw a vision. <sup>f</sup> ch. x. 3, 17. & xi. 5.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; <sup>g</sup> which opened to them of his own accord: and they went <sup>g</sup> ch. xvi. 26.

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“Bind on thy sandals.” The reader will remember how the Lord had commanded (Mark vi. 9), “Be shod with sandals,” as being lighter, and more fit for expeditious missionary work.

“Cast thy garment about thee,” *i.e.*, the outer garment (*ἱμάτιον*).

All this seems to indicate composure and deliberation. There was no loss of time, but no needless hurry.

9. “And he went out, and followed him . . . thought he saw a vision.” This is a proof, as near certainty as possible, that St. Luke received this account from St. Peter himself. No such description of his inner feelings could have come except at first hand. He had lately had a vision of the vessel let down, full of animals, clean and unclean; and what occurred now seemed so strange to him that he thought it was an illusion; that it might, as the former one, betoken some reality, but was not itself a reality.

10. “When they were past the first and second ward.” The “ward” signifies guard, and probably signifies sentries or soldiers on duty at the end of corridors or galleries, who were by the power of the angel thrown into a deep sleep, or deprived of the power of observing what was going on. Mr. Blunt suggests that these two wards, or *φυλακαί*, “may have been an inner and outer enclosure surrounding the prison in the same manner as the keep of a mediæval castle was surrounded by the inner and the outer bailey.”

“They came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord.” This seems to imply that there was no fast-barred gate which they had to pass through till they came to the outer one, or the supernatural opening of it would have been first mentioned.

“Which opened to them of his own accord.” This “of his own accord” means without visible appearance of pressure or motion

out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that <sup>h</sup> the Lord hath sent his angel, and <sup>l</sup> hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

<sup>h</sup> Ps. xxxiv. 7.  
Dan. iii. 28.  
& vi. 22. Heb.  
i. 14.

<sup>l</sup> Job v. 19.  
Ps. xxxiii. 18,  
19, & xxxiv.  
22. & xii. 2.  
& xcvi. 10.  
2 Cor. i. 10.  
2 Pet. ii. 9.

from without—like an automaton, the spring or cause of whose motions is hidden.

There is a singular parallel case in "Jewish War," vi. ch. v. sect. 3: "Moreover the eastern gate of the inner court of the temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested on a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night."

"And forthwith the angel departed from him." Leaving him to himself, for now that he was delivered he had to choose his own course of action, whether he would at once flee the city, or stay till he had acquainted the brethren with the circumstances of his deliverance.

11. "And when Peter was come to himself . . . all the expectation of the people of the Jews"—that is, when he was thoroughly awake, and had emerged from the confusion of mind that circumstances so like a dream had brought upon him. Then he said, "This was no vision, as I thought, but God hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me from my danger."

"And from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." This shows very clearly how soon the unbelieving Jews began to be looked upon even by Christian Jews as a body external, and radically hostile, to the Church. It has been urged against the authenticity of St. John's Gospel, that one born and bred a Jew would never have spoken of his own nation as "the Jews;" but here we have the Apostle of the Circumcision, more than fifty years before that Gospel was written, speaking of them as if they were external, and as if he had a far closer connection with the Christian body than with them.

12 And when he had considered *the thing*, <sup>k</sup> he came to the house of Mary the mother of <sup>l</sup> John, whose sur- <sup>k</sup> ch. iv. 23.  
 name was Mark; where many were gathered <sup>l</sup> ch. xv. 37.  
 together <sup>m</sup> praying. <sup>m</sup> ver. 5.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came || to hearken, named Rhoda. <sup>l</sup> Or, to ask who was there.

12. "And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary," &c. Considered what was the best course to take, according to his Master's express direction: "When persecuted in one city, flee ye to another;" but he could not do so without acquainting the Church with his deliverance; and so he resolved to make all known in a house where he knew many would be praying for him, and agonized about his safety.

"He came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark." I cannot see why Mary should be thus described as the mother of John, and the same John identified with Mark, except that this Mark was the Evangelist, and companion of the Apostles Peter and Paul. There is no other Mark of such importance that a leading mother in the spiritual Israel should be identified by her relationship to him. To this we must add that Peter calls this Mark his son—that is, his son in the faith; and that he is "sister's son to Barnabas," who by his Apostleship was closely connected with Peter. Knowing the devotion of the family, and their personal as well as reverential regard for himself, he would naturally expect to find there the greatest number of believers to whom he might make known his deliverance.

Praying, *i. e.*, praying specially for his safety. They were apparently "continuing all night in prayer to God."

13. "And as Peter knocked at the door, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda." We should say, "Came to open the door;" but in those times, in which there was nothing like the security for life and property that there is now, the prominent duty of the door-keeper was to listen to see if he or she recognized the voice of the person on the outside.

"Rhoda," or Rose—just as Dorcas signifies "roe," and Susannah "Lily." Cornelius à Lapide, quotes a passage from Helecas, telling us that she was martyred in the reign of Trajan.



14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, "It is his angel.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. xlviii.  
16. Matt.  
xviii. 10.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

14. "And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness," &c. This is a true touch of nature, and could not have been invented; the parallel to it is the woman of Samaria leaving her water-pot.

It shows the love that all classes, even the slaves, had personally for St. Peter, and which could only have been called forth by the fulness of his love for the brethren.

15. "And they said unto her, Thou art mad . . . It is his angel." Most probably this meant his guardian angel. The Jews believed that every Israelite had a guardian angel assigned to him by God; and our Lord, in His words in Matthew xviii. 10, certainly goes very far to assure us that this was a truth. Such passages as Hebrews i. 14 ("Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?") clearly prove to true Christians that these blessed spirits are much nearer to us, and take much more interest in us, than this rationalistic age seems to think.

Still, it may be asked why they should think that it was his guardian angel rather than his own spirit? Most probably because of a belief among the Jews that the guardian angel frequently assumed the voice and appearance of him whom God had given him to protect.

16, 17. "But Peter continued knocking: and when . . . went into another place." After he had acquainted them with the circumstances of his deliverance, he desired them to make it known; and the first person to whom they were to carry the joyful news was James. The only reason that can possibly be assigned for this is that he was the president of the Church, or Bishop. Every notice of him in the Scriptures seems to accord with this. Thus when St. Paul went up to Jerusalem after his third journey, it is

17 But he, °beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord ° ch. xiii. 18.  
& xix. 33. &  
xxi. 40. had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and *there* abode.

said that he "went in unto James, and all the elders were present" (xxi. 18). All ecclesiastical history confirms this. Thus Eusebius: "This James, therefore, whom the ancients, on account of the excellence of his virtue, surnamed the Just, was the first that received the Episcopate of the Church of Jerusalem." The same writer also mentions at the same time his martyrdom. "There were, however, two Jameses—one called the Just, who was thrown from a wing of the temple, and beaten to death with a fuller's club; and another, who was beheaded."

"And he departed, and went into another place." This other place must have been out of the boundaries of the kingdom of Herod, who ruled over Judæa, Samaria, Galilee, and Peræa. Some suppose that he went to Rome, and founded the Church there; but this is impossible, for the language of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans seems clearly to imply that it had not been founded by an Apostle (Rom. i. 11). Others suppose that he went to Antioch; but ecclesiastical writers give us no hint as to where he took refuge.

18, 19. "Now as soon as it was day . . . put to death . . . Cæsarea, and there abode." "No small stir." Because the escape of a prisoner was almost always punished by death, and there would be no way of accounting for the escape of one so carefully guarded, and the punishment of death was not remitted.

"And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and there abode." This seems to imply that he began to think that he was not safe in Jerusalem. The escape of Peter could not be explained, and he

20 ¶ And Herod || was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus † the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because ¶ their country was nourished by the king's country.

|| Or, bare an hostile mind, intending war.  
 † Gr. that was over the king's bedchamber.  
 ¶ 1 Kings v. 9, 11. Ezek. xxvii. 17.

21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

naturally thought that there must be some wide-spread conspiracy to conceal it.

20. "And Herod was highly displeased . . . nourished by the king's country." Of the cause of this displeasure history has not informed us. Mr. Blunt gives reasons for supposing that he had an old grudge against them, because they had exposed his reception of a bribe by the city of Damascus to further the interests of that city in a dispute with Tyre respecting the boundaries of their respective territories, and that he did his utmost, by lavishly expending money on the city and seaport of Berytus, to advance its interests at the expense of the two great commercial cities. Baronius thinks that it was because they had received St. Peter on his flight from Jerusalem, and being free cities, and so independent of Herod, they were able to protect him.

"And, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend . . . king's country." The territories of Tyre and Sidon consisted of a narrow strip of coast, totally inadequate to maintain the inhabitants of the two populous cities.

It is remarkable that this dependence seems to have existed in the time of Solomon, for that king in return for Hiram's assistance in the matter of the building of the temple, gave him 20,000 measures of wheat for his household (1 Kings v. 11). Ezekiel also mentions that Tyre traded with Judah for wheat, and honey, and oil, and balm (xxvii. 17).

21, 22. "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel . . . And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." We have the account of this incident in Josephus, and of the subsequent death of Herod, which so completely corroborates the Evangelists' account in all its leading particulars, that I will give it in full. "On the second day of which

22 And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.*

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord <sup>a</sup> smote him, because <sup>b</sup> he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. xxv.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam.

xxiv. 17.

<sup>c</sup> Ps cxv. 1.

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shows (certain shows in honour of Cæsar), he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out one from one place, and another from another (though not for his good), that he was a God, and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently after looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him, and he fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also rose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends and said, 'I, whom you call a God, am commanded presently to depart this life: while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away to death.' . . . When he had been quite worn out by the pain for five days, he departed this life."

23. "And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him . . . gave up the ghost." Josephus said that he died of exhaustion through great pains, but gives no cause of such pains. St. Luke tells us that this his death was "by the visitation of God." The angel of the Lord smote him with a painful and loathsome disease. It is worthy of remark that the same fearful symptoms, including the eating of a part of the body by worms, accompanied the death of Herod the Great, and also of Antiochus Epiphanes, and so has been supposed to be reserved by God for the punishment of persecuting tyrants.

24 ¶ But <sup>a</sup> the word of God grew and multiplied.

<sup>a</sup> Is. lv. 11.  
 ch. vi. 7. & xix.  
 20. Col. i. 6.  
 ¶ Or, *charge*,  
 ch. xi. 29, 30.  
<sup>t</sup> ch. xiii. 5, 13.  
 & xv. 37.  
<sup>u</sup> ver. 12.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* || ministry, and <sup>t</sup> took with them <sup>u</sup> John, whose surname was Mark.

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“Because he gave not God the glory,” *i. e.*, by reproving, or rather punishing, the flatterers who deified him.

24. “But the word of God grew and multiplied.” Partly because the death of Herod removed the leading persecutor, partly because the supernatural nature of his death, and the deliverance of Peter by the angel, increased the faith of the Christians in the truth of the Gospel they proclaimed.

25. “And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem . . . . surname was Mark.” We gather from this that Saul did not consider Jerusalem any longer as the scene of his labours. Bishop Wordsworth supposes that during this brief sojourn at Jerusalem he had had the vision mentioned in Acts xxii. 17-21, in which the Lord had said to him, “Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

“When they had fulfilled their ministry.” Notice how the collection and bringing of alms to the saints is called a “ministry,” so also it is called in Rom. xv. 25, “But now I go to Jerusalem to minister unto the saints;” and in 2 Cor. ix. 13, “By the experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ,” &c.

It was a ministry as much as preaching, because it knit the most distant Churches together in love, and exemplified in very deed the truth of the Communion of Saints.

“John, whose surname was Mark.” For he was connected both with Barnabas and Peter; he was related in blood to the one, and was the spiritual offspring of the other.

## CHAP. XIII.

NOW there were \* in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers ; as <sup>b</sup> Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and <sup>c</sup> Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, || which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Anno  
DOMINI  
45.

<sup>a</sup> ch. xi. 27. &  
xiv. 28. & xv.  
35.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xi. 22-26.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. xvi. 21.

|| Or, Herod's  
fosterbrother.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy

1. "Now there were in the Church that was at Antioch certain prophets," &c. "Prophets"—that is, inspired men—more direct organs of the Spirit than evangelists, pastors, and teachers; and apparently intended by God not to be a permanent order, as shortly after the Apostles' times they seem to disappear altogether.

"Simeon that was called Niger." From his first name it is evident that he was a Jew, and from his receiving the Latin name of Niger (or black), it is evident that he had some government office, or was otherwise connected with the Roman occupation.

"Lucius of Cyrene." Very probably a Cyrenian Hellenist, one of those mentioned in xi. 20, who spake unto the Greeks preaching the Lord Jesus.

"And Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch," rather the foster-brother of Herod, *i.e.*, Herod Antipas.

The name is the same as Manahem. One of this name, an Essene, foretold to Herod when a boy his future exaltation, and was high in that tyrant's favour when the prediction proved true. This man is conjectured to have been his son or grandson.

"And Saul." Mentioned last, because probably the account of this matter was given to St. Luke by himself.

2. "And as they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted." The word "ministered" (*λειτουργεῖν*) requires special attention. It is a sacrificial term, and so is used (along with *ἱερατεύειν*) to denote the priestly ministration of Zacharias (Luke, i. 23), and of the high priest in the Jewish tabernacle, or temple, in Hebrews x. 11. It is used elsewhere, as in Rom. xv. 27, and its noun, *λειτουργία*, as denoting the

† Num. viii.  
 14. ch. ix.  
 15. & xxii. 21.  
 Rom. i. 1.  
 Gal. i. 15. &  
 ii. 9.

Ghost said, † Separate me Barnabas and Saul for

preparing of a consecrated offering to God, but always, either directly or indirectly, has the idea of sacrifice to God underlying it. I have no doubt that it means here celebrating the Eucharist, because we have every reason to believe that from the very first the celebration of the Eucharist was the great central act of Christian worship. It is absurd to suppose that preaching is here meant, because preaching is always specifically mentioned, and the ministration being *to the Lord* seems to imply an act of worship. I have not the slightest doubt that there is here meant the offering up to God of a Christian *λειτουργία*, or Liturgy, which was always an Eucharistic or Communion office, and the Liturgies of the Apostolical Constitutions in their earliest forms, seem, from their combined grandeur and simplicity, to be worthy of Apostolic origin.<sup>1</sup>

“And fasted.” This seems to imply that they had had some intimations given to them by the Spirit, that they would have at His bidding very shortly to perform some very momentous service, and they prepared for it by fasting. Ordinations have always been preceded by fasting, which in a few centuries took the form of the Ember Fasts.

“The Holy Ghost said.” This is especially to be noticed. The Holy Ghost speaks audibly, as it were, or with such a mode of intimation of His Will as was in all respects as clear and unmistakable as an audible voice. What follows, then, was a direct act of God—as direct an act of Christ through the Spirit as were the choice and ordination of the original twelve. It was no doubt an act performed by the hands of human instruments, but these instruments being comparatively obscure men, the work of the Spirit is the more magnified.

“Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Notice here how the Holy Spirit asserts His own Divine Nature and Authority. “Separate me,” rather, separate *to Me*, for the work whereunto I, the Spirit, have called them. So that when men are consecrated, or set apart to God, they are

<sup>1</sup> Of course there are interpolations in these Liturgies as they have come down to us, but the primitive form and the interpolations of a later age are clearly distinguishable.

the work \* whereunto I have called them.

\* Matt. ix. 38.  
ch. xiv. 28.  
Rom. x. 15.  
Eph. iii. 7, 8.  
1 Tim. ii. 7.  
2 Tim. i. 11.  
Heb. v. 4.

set apart to the Holy Spirit. So that the Holy Spirit, along with the Father and the Son, calls to Himself the elect of God. We can only believe this because we believe that "the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal."

"The work whereunto I have called them." This was the work of the Apostolate. It has been supposed by some to have been the journey upon which they were entering; but, if so, there would seem to be a separate consecration required for each journey, of which temporary consecrations there is certainly not the smallest evidence.

Saul had been converted by the sight of the Lord, and the Lord had assigned to him the Apostleship of the Gentiles. He had been separated for this from his mother's womb. He had been called by God's grace, and yet even in his case a solemn setting apart by ordination or consecration was required.

But the important question now arises, by whom was this performed? We might say, "by the Holy Ghost Himself," but as He made use of human instruments, the comparatively obscure prophets and teachers of a local church are chosen for this purpose. But why was Saul not sent to the Apostles to be ordained or separated for the work? We answer, for the same reason that he was not sent to the Apostles to be taught, though these Apostles had been the constant companions of the Lord. It was the will of God to raise up in St. Paul an independent Apostolate, not receiving either instruction, or orders, or consecration from the twelve. Was then the Church divided by this action on the part of the Lord? No, in no respect, for the Apostle now ordained and consecrated was the Apostle of Unity. He it was who was especially raised up to proclaim the truth that the Church was "one body in Christ." This was his leading truth, his particular message.<sup>1</sup> This he no doubt received in its fulness by direct revelation from Christ, probably in Arabia. This doctrine preached by St. Paul, the ministry ordained by him, the churches founded by him, all, at once, and from the first, formed part and parcel of the Church. In fact, in a very great degree they were the Church. There is, as far

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Corin. i. 10-13, xii. 13, 14, 27; Ephes. iii. 6, iv. 3, 4



3 And 'when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their*  
 ' ch. vi. 6. hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy  
 Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence  
 ' ch. iv. 36. they sailed to ' Cyprus.

as I have been able to read the Fathers, no trace whatsoever of any Petrine or Pauline school of thought, certainly not in Clement, Ignatius, Irenæus, Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian. There was no separate succession from Paul asserting itself against the ministerial stream flowing from Peter or John. But still it may be asked, how could obscure men like Simeon, called Niger, or Lucius, or Manaen, ordain a man to an office higher than their own? We answer, by the direct voice of the Holy Ghost. The consecration of Aaron by Moses is parallel. Moses not an high priest, consecrated Aaron to be the head of the succession of High priests; but as far as I can see there has been no other parallel case, certainly none in which the Holy Ghost has said as He said then, "Separate me this or that person to the work whereunto I have called him."

"And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them," &c. The fact that they fasted seems to necessitate that the ordination was postponed till the next day. Notice how, though the two men were especially marked out by the Holy Ghost, and were, humanly speaking, as sure as possible of fulfilling a successful ministry, they intermitted neither fasting nor prayer.

4. "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia," &c. "Sent forth by the Holy Ghost." This may refer either to the ordination or consecration which had just taken place, and which was by the especial command of the Holy Ghost, or it may be that the Holy Ghost ordered the way by which they were to begin their first missionary journey, just as on another subsequent occasion they were forbidden by the same Spirit to go to Asia (Acts xvi. 6).

"Departed unto Seleucia." Seleucia was the port of Antioch, which latter city was situated sixteen miles from the sea, on a river, the Orontes, not navigable. It was built by Seleucus Nicator, the son of Antiochus, whence its name.

"They sailed to Cyprus." Evidently because there was a very

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5 And when they were at Salamis, <sup>h</sup> they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also <sup>1</sup> John to *their* minister. <sup>h</sup> ver. 49.  
<sup>1</sup> ch. xii. 25.  
& xv. 37.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found <sup>h</sup> a certain sorcerer, a <sup>h</sup> false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus: <sup>h</sup> ch. viii. 9.

large number of Jews residing in the island. When Paul and Barnabas preached there, A.D. 45, they were supposed to number one-half of the population. The original inhabitants were probably Hittites. It is supposed to be the Chittim of the Old Testament.

5. "And when they were at Salamis." Salamis was the principal port of the island in the east, a few miles north of the present city of Famagosta, and within a day's sail of Seleucia.

"They preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews." This seems to mean that they did not as yet preach in the streets to the Gentiles, and as so large a proportion of the population were Jews, it was the most likely way of making the Gospel known, for if they had begun with preaching to the Gentiles, most probably all the synagogues would have been shut against them.

"And they had also John to their minister." Some suppose that as it seems to have been a rule with the Apostles to commit the actual administration of Baptism to others, this means that as their minister he baptized, and probably prepared what was needful for the celebration of the Eucharist: others, that he was employed by them in more homely and secular offices, so that their whole time might be devoted to the preaching of the Word.

"And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found," &c. Paphos, that is, new Paphos, now called Baffa, was the capital city, and now the residence of the pro-consul. It was a few miles to the north of old Paphos, where was the celebrated temple of Venus.

6, 7. "They found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew . . . which was with the deputy . . . desired to hear the word of God."

"A certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew." The word sorcerer is Magos, the same as the name given to Simon, who had bewitched the people of Samaria with sorceries. From this name, borne also by the arch-heretic, being attached to him, it is supposed, not without reason, that he had apostatized from Judaism and held Gnostical

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

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superstitions. "Whose name was Bar-jesus," *i.e.*, son of Joshua or Jesus. Perhaps this name may be recorded by the Evangelist as presenting such a contrast with his baleful superstitions. The son of salvation had become the son of perdition.

7. "Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man." Commentators notice the accuracy of St. Luke here. The governors of those provinces which were held to be under the special government of the Senate were under proconsuls, in Greek *Anthupatoi*: whereas those which were supposed to require a strong military force to keep them from insurrection were under the Emperor as chief or general (*prætor*) of the army, and their governors were called *proprætors*. Augustus assigned Cyprus, A.D. 22, to the Senate; and hence its governor was called, as here, *proconsul* or *Anthupatos*, translated "deputy" in the Authorized, and in the Revised "proconsul."

"Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, who called for Barnabas and Saul," &c. A prudent man—the word prudent, *συνετός*, rather signifies a man of intelligence or understanding.<sup>1</sup>

It may be asked how a man of intelligence had connected with him an impostor like Bar-jesus, and the answer is that the educated Romans and Greeks had long given up all belief in the mythologies of their forefathers, but the better disposed among them, feeling the need of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state of retribution, eagerly sought out any superstition or extravagant doctrine, particularly if it came from the East, which might throw any light on the great problems of the future state. It is very probable that Sergius Paulus was attracted rather by the Magianism or Gnosticism of the Magos Bar-jesus than by any shreds of Judaism which might yet remain in his teaching.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Commentators notice that Pliny, who wrote his Natural History about forty years after this, gives the name of Sergius Paulus as his principal authority for the statements contained in his second and eighteenth books, some of which have to do with Cyprus, so that it is not improbable that the Sergius Paulus of Pliny and St. Luke are the same.

<sup>2</sup> The following extracts from Conybeare and Howson's "Life of St. Paul," bearing on this, will interest the reader:—

"For many years before this time, and many years after, impostors from the East,

8 But <sup>1</sup>Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away <sup>1</sup> Exod. vii. 11. <sup>2</sup> Tim. iii. 8. the deputy from the faith.

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“Who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.” No doubt some of the devout Hellenists among the immense population of Jews had told him that these new teachers gave in their teaching far firmer assurances respecting a future state than any other Jewish teachers.

8. “But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation).” Very little certain can be said respecting this “interpretation.” Some suppose that Elymas is an Arabic word, having the same significance as *ulema* or *sage*. Cornelius à Lapidè quotes Sanchez as conjecturing that it was a barbarous, perhaps an ancient Cypriot word signifying Magician. It cannot possibly be an interpretation in another tongue of Bar-jesus.

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pretending to magical powers, had great influence over the Roman mind. All the Greek and Latin literature of the Empire, from Horace to Lucian, abounds in proof of the prevalent credulity of this sceptical period. Unbelief, when it has become conscious of its weakness, is often glad to give its hand to Superstition. The faith of educated Romans was utterly gone. We can hardly wonder, when the East was thrown open—the land of mystery—the fountain of the earliest migrations—the cradle of the earliest religions—that the imagination both of the populace and of the aristocracy of Rome became fanatically excited, and that they greedily welcomed the most absurd and degrading superstitions. Not only was the metropolis of the Empire crowded with ‘hungry Greeks,’ but ‘Syrian fortune-tellers’ flocked into all the haunts of public amusement. Every part of the East contributed its share to the general superstition. The Gods of Egypt and Phrygia found unflinching votaries. The more remote districts of Asia Minor sent their itinerant soothsayers; Syria sent her music and her medicines; Chaldæa her ‘Babylonian numbers’ and mathematical calculations. To these corrupters of the people of Romulus we must add one more Asiatic nation—the nation of the Israelites—and it is an instructive employment to observe that, while some members of the Jewish people were rising by the Divine power to the highest position ever occupied by men on earth, others were sinking themselves, and others along with them, to the lowest and most contemptible degradation. . . . The Jewish beggar-woman was the gipsy of the first century, shivering and crouching in the outskirts of the city, and telling fortunes, as Ezekiel said of old, ‘for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread.’ The eminent men of the declining Republic, and the absolute sovereigns of the early Empire, were tainted and enslaved by the same superstitions. The great Marins had in his camp a Syrian, probably a Jewish prophetess, by whose divinations he regulated the course of his campaigns. Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus, at the close of the Republic, when the oracles were silent, sought information from Oriental astrology. No picture in the great Latin Satirist is more powerfully drawn than that in which he shows us the Emperor Tiberius ‘sitting on the rock of Capri with his flock of Chaldæans around him.’”

9 Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul), <sup>m</sup> filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

<sup>m</sup> ch. iv. 8.

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, <sup>n</sup> *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

<sup>n</sup> Matt. xiii. 38.

John viii. 44.

1 John iii. 8.

<sup>o</sup> Exod. ix. 3.

1 Sam. v. 6.

11 And now, behold, <sup>o</sup> the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the

9. "Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost," and so able to search into the man's inmost spirit, and to discern that he had wholly given himself up to evil, "set his eyes upon him," as looking him through and through. The same word is used of St. Peter looking on the lame man at the Beautiful Gate. It seems to be connected here with the gift of the "discerning of spirits."

From this time Saul seems to have dropped his Hebrew name of Shaul, and to have taken the Gentile name of somewhat similar sound. So John Mark dropped the name John, and was only known afterwards as Mark. However, as Bishop Jacobson remarks, "a second name was so very common, *e.g.*, Symeon Niger, Barsabas Justus, John Mark, that it might fairly be assumed that the Apostle had all along borne both names, Saul as a Hebrew, and Paulus as a Roman citizen."

10. "And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief . . . enemy of all righteousness," &c. It is to be remembered that these words are the words of one who was "full of the Holy Ghost," and so described exactly the man's state in the sight of God, the Searcher of hearts.

"Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" I cannot help gathering from this that Elymas had first perverted the teaching of the Old Testament, most probably misrepresenting it, and intermixing it with Gnostical or Magian errors.

11. "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee . . . lead him by the hand." The punishment inflicted upon him was not from St. Paul in any way, but from God. It was the work of the Holy Ghost, and the words of St. Paul simply foretold it. The punishment answered to the crime. He strove, most probably for

sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and <sup>John</sup> <sup>¶</sup> ch. xv. 38. departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

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his own selfish purposes, to keep the proconsul in darkness; and now "a mist and darkness fell on him."

It was, however, sent in mercy to bring even him to repentance, for the Apostle says that it was to be but "for a season." It was also sent to enable the proconsul to decide for the truth; for we read—

12. "Then the deputy [or proconsul], when he saw what was done . . . doctrine of the Lord." Not merely at the subject-matter of the teaching, but at the awful and irresistible power by which it was enforced.

Bishop Jacobson remarks that Sergius Paulus was more decidedly the first fruits of heathenism than Cornelius.

13. "Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga," &c. Notice, it is now Paul and his company. Barnabas naturally gives way to the more strong-willed and energetic Apostle, who henceforth takes the lead.

"They came to Perga." Perga was the principal city of Pamphylia, and was a considerable place, seven miles from the sea, up the river Cestrus. It is now called Eski Kalessi (Lewin).

"And John departing from them returned to Jerusalem." Many conjectures have been hazarded respecting this defection, for a blamable defection undoubtedly it was. The late Professor Blunt's is the grossest. He supposes that John Mark, being nearly related to Barnabas, who was a Cyprian, had many friends and relations in Cyprus; that he took the opportunity of the journey of Paul and Barnabas to visit them—in fact, to make a short summer holiday of it—and then returned, when he found that they were about to face the formidable dangers of missionary work in Asia Minor. Most others more or less attribute his leaving the Apostles to a

14 ¶ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and <sup>a</sup> went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

<sup>a</sup> ch. xvi. 13.  
& xvii. 2. &  
xviii. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Luke iv. 16  
ver. 27.

15 And <sup>r</sup> after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto

certain cowardice or indolence. I cannot help thinking that Mark's Jewish prejudices had much to do with it. He was not yet prepared for such absolutely unreserved offers of salvation to the Gentiles: and when he found that Paul was intent upon making the tour through Asia Minor (as we call the district) a missionary journey to the Gentiles, as such, he declined; and it may be that he felt that Barnabas, his relative, would henceforth be very secondary to Paul, and he was not prepared for this, for he thought that he had traversed Cyprus under his uncle rather than under Paul. His sin or error was not such as prevented Barnabas from proposing that he should again accompany them; but it was such as made Paul, the more determined and uncompromising Apostle of the Gentiles, reject his aid.

We are thankful to know that afterwards he was fully reinstated in the affections of the great Apostle. Paul includes him amongst the few that had been a comfort to him (Col. iv. 10, 11); and he writes for him to be brought to him as "profitable to him for the ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 11).

14, 15. "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia . . . say on." This Antioch was one of the many cities of the same name built by Seleucus Nicator, and called Antioch by him in honour of his father, Antiochus. It was at the extreme north of Pisidia, and close to the confines of Phrygia and Lycaonia. It lay on the slopes of Mount Taurus, and had obtained the Jus Italicum, and was a Roman colony. It was also a place of considerable trade, which attracted a large population of Jews, whose synagogue the Apostles attended on the Sabbath after their arrival.

"And after the reading of the law and the prophets." The law and the prophets were divided into certain sections, one out of each of which was read every Sunday, a custom very similar to the reading of our Lessons. The sermon or exhortation would naturally find its place after these, and in many, perhaps in most cases, supply



them, saying, *Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.*

• Heb. xiii. 22

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with

• ch. xii. 17.

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subjects of exhortation, just as our sermon succeeds the reading of the Epistle and Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

The freedom, however, which was given to total strangers to exhort, or to the ruler of the Synagogue to invite any person in the assembly to address it, is remarkable. It is not improbable that in this case the ruler of the synagogue was well disposed to the Apostles, and desired that the claims of the Lord should be brought before the people.

The following discourse is the only one preserved to us out of the innumerable sermons which St. Paul preached to his countrymen in their synagogues, just as the small fragment of the address delivered at Athens is the only one which remains of his sermons to the Gentiles. Both are probably, if not certainly, the outlines, the one of his first discourse, in each synagogue, the other in each market-place. He would bring before the Jews the dealings of God with their fathers leading up to the Messiah; he would remind the Gentiles of the God of nature, of His greatness and power and goodness, as seen in the works of His hands, and tell them how unreasonable, not to say wicked, it was to worship Him under any form of a created thing.

This discourse of St. Paul here at Antioch has been likened to that of St. Stephen in Jerusalem, but I fail to see the resemblance, for the leading object of St. Stephen is to convince the Jews of sin in their resisting the Holy Ghost, which intention does not appear in St. Paul's discourse. The points of history touched upon in each are altogether different.

16. "Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand . . . give

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Plumtre supposes that we can form some reasonable conjecture as to the time of the Jewish year on which this sermon was preached. Assuming, which is very likely, that the contents of the two lessons, one from the law, another from the prophets, furnished the Apostle with the subject of his remarks, we find that his opening words, "suffered he their manners," or rather, "hate them as a man doth bear his son," refer evidently to, or are a reproduction of, Deut. i. 31. The corresponding lesson would be Isaiah i., in which we find the similar doctrine, "I have nourished and brought up children," &c. This was the lesson for the forty-fourth Sabbath in the year, which fell in July or August.

u ver. 26, 42,  
43. ch. x. 35.  
v Deut. vii.

6, 7.

γ Exod. i. 1.  
Ps. cv. 23, 24.  
ch. vii. 17.

z Exod. vi. 8,  
& xiii. 14, 16.

• Exod. xvi. 35.  
Numb. xiv. 33,  
34. Ps. xcv. 9,  
10. ch. vii. 36.

+ Gr. *etropo-  
phoresen*,  
perhaps for  
*etrophopho-  
resen*, *bore*,  
or *fed them*,  
as a nurse  
*beareth*, or  
*feedeth her  
child*.

Deut. i. 31.  
according to  
the LXX. and  
so Chrysostom.

his hand said, Men of Israel, and "ye that fear God, give audience.

17 The God of this people of Israel \* chose our fathers, and exalted the people † when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, \* and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And † about the time of forty years † suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

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18. "Suffered he their manners" (*ἠτροφώθησαν*), read by N, B., D., H., L., P., and most Cursives. "Sustained he them" (*ἀτροφώθησαν*), with A., C\*, E., some Cursives, Sah., Copt., Syriac.

audience." Beckoning with his hand after the manner of an orator who desired to command attention.

"Men of Israel, and ye that fear God." Those that fear God are the religious proselytes—those among the heathen who had turned from their idols to worship the true God, the God of Israel.

17. "The God of this people . . . chose our fathers and exalted . . . out of it." This, that God *chose* the people, is the keynote of the discourse. God *chose* the fathers, He *chose* judges, He *chose* Saul, He repented of His choice because of Saul's sin, and *chose* David, and then He *chose* finally the Son of David. They rejected this Son of David, but He was not the less God's Choice, God's Elect One, and Him the Apostle sets forth, as raised from the dead to be the One full and perfect Justifier of the people of God.

Such is the outline of this discourse; no doubt it is the merest outline of what the Apostle really delivered, but it is the outline; no matter how long the discourse was, it proceeded on these lines.

The reader will perceive that it by no means runs parallel to the discourse of St. Stephen, but that it does correspond with St. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, with this exception, that St. Peter starts from a prophecy of Joel, the fulfilment of which the Jews then before him both saw and heard; whereas St. Paul starts from the fountain-head of the Jewish economy in the choice of God.

"Exalted the people," *i. e.*, by multiplying them enormously.

18. "And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners

19 And when <sup>b</sup>he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, <sup>c</sup>he divided their land to them by lot.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. vii. 1.  
<sup>c</sup> Josh. xiv. 1,  
 2. Ps. lxxviii.  
 55.

19, 20. The order of the words in the Authorized, "He divided their land to them by lot, and after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years," is to be found in D<sup>e</sup>, E., H., L., P., most Cursives, and Syriac. The order of the Revised Version of 1881, "He gave them their land for an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years: and after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the Prophet," is to be found in N, A., B., C., and Cursives 13, 15, 18, 36, 40, 61, 137, Vulg., Sahidic, and Coptic.

in the wilderness." An exceedingly slight difference of reading, one letter in fact, makes here a considerable difference in the sense. It is clearly and tersely explained in the margin.

Both readings yield a true sense: God suffered their manners (*ἐτροποφόρησεν*), *i. e.*, He bore with their murmurings and rebellions without consuming them; or, adopting the other reading (*ἐτροποφόρησεν*), He nourished them, as in Deut. i. 31, "And in the wilderness where thou hast seen how the Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came to this place."

19. "And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he," &c. The seven nations were the tribes accursed for their exceeding wickedness. We find the whole of these seven enumerated in Deut. vii. as the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

19, 20. "He divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." There is very great difficulty here about the chronology, and the difference of reading which has been adopted by the Revisers of 1881 solves this by introducing another difficulty of its own, far greater than the original one. According to 1 Kings vi. 1, Solomon began to build the temple four hundred and eighty years after the children of Israel came out of Egypt. But this will not leave time for four hundred and fifty years of the rule of the Judges; so some have conjectured that an error of one hundred years crept into the text, and that we ought to read three hundred and fifty, but there is no authority whatsoever for this. But there is very great reason for supposing that there has been an error in the copying of the numerals in 1 Kings vi. 1. And

20 And after that <sup>d</sup> he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, <sup>e</sup> until Samuel the prophet.

<sup>d</sup> Judg. ii. 16.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Sam. iii. 20.

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for this reason that Josephus, who must have had the Book of Kings before him when he wrote this part of his history, deliberately set aside the received reading. "Solomon," he writes ("Antiquities," viii. 3, 1), "began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, in the second month, which the Macedonians call Artemisius, and the Hebrews Jar, five hundred and ninety-two years after the exodus out of Egypt." If we assume this computation, and allow between sixty and seventy years for the wanderings in the wilderness and the time of Joshua, who is never reckoned among the Judges, and allow between eighty and ninety years for the reigns of Saul and David and the first four years of Solomon, we shall have between four hundred and forty and four hundred and fifty years for the Judges, which is sufficiently near. It must be understood that in doing this we do not take Josephus as an authority for the chronology, but simply as a witness against the received reading of 1 Kings vi. 1, a passage which he evidently had before him when he wrote his history.

The other way of solving the difficulty is by adopting the reading of A, A., B., C., several Cursives, the Vulg., Sahidic, Coptic, and Armenian, and reading as in the Revised of 1881, "he gave them their land for an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years; and after that he gave unto them judges until Samuel." In this case (if I understand it aright) we are to suppose, as many old Latin writers do, that the giving of the land commenced with the birth of Isaac, when God chose their fathers in him, and ended with the distribution of the land, and after this distribution under Joshua, God gave the Judges, the time during which they judged not being mentioned. But this commencement with the birth of Isaac is perfectly arbitrary and gratuitous, for the Israelites could hardly be said to have their inheritance divided to them by lot when Abraham had no inheritance in the land, "no, not so much as to set his foot on," and the Israelites during the greater part of this time were bond-slaves in Egypt. Besides this, it breaks into the sequence of the history in St. Paul's discourse, for St. Paul gives in order first the bringing out of Egypt, then the sustentation in the wilderness, then

21 ' And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And <sup>g</sup> when he had removed him, <sup>h</sup> he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, <sup>i</sup> I have found David the *son* of Jesse, <sup>k</sup> a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. viii. 5. & x. 1.  
<sup>g</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 23, 26, 28. & xvi. 1. Hos. xiii. 11.  
<sup>h</sup> 1 Sam. xvi. 13. 2 Sam. ii. 4. & v. 3.  
<sup>i</sup> Ps. lxxxix. 20.  
<sup>k</sup> 1 Sam. xiii. 14. ch. vii. 46.

the destruction of the seven nations, and then it is supposed that we are referred back to the birth of Isaac.

I believe then that St. Paul's chronological statement as usually received is most in accordance with facts, and that, even if we adopt the reading of *κ*, A., B., C., &c., we must not make the division to take place at a time when there was nothing approaching to an actual division. We had much better leave the matter in its difficulty than invent such unreal ways of solving that difficulty.

21. "And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul," &c. God, it is said, here *gave* unto them Saul. . . . In doing this He gave them a man after their own heart, courageous, determined, prompt in action, of magnificent presence. If they had known him, he was just the man that the people would have chosen for themselves; but he was not the man after God's heart, he never would rule as if he was the anointed of God, and as if his people were the people of God, and so God set him aside, and chose David.

22. "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be," &c. St. Paul here puts together two or three testimonies of God to David. One from Psalm lxxxix. 20, "I have found David my servant, with my holy oil have I anointed him;" and 1 Samuel xiii. 14, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart." Though the religious character of David is disfigured with one very foul blot, yet of that sin he deeply repented and was forgiven, and he ruled the people well, so that during his reign they were more than at any other time free from idolatry. He regulated the worship of the sanctuary, and he prepared ample materials and treasure wherewith Solomon, his son, built the house where God set His Name.

- 23 <sup>1</sup> Of this man's seed hath God according <sup>m</sup> to *his* promise raised unto Israel <sup>n</sup> a Saviour, Jesus :
- 24 <sup>o</sup> When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.
- 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, <sup>p</sup> Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.
- 26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of

<sup>1</sup> Isai. xi. 1.  
 Luke i. 32, 68.  
 ch. ii. 30.

Rom. i. 3.  
<sup>m</sup> 2 Sam. vii.  
 12. Ps. cxxxii.  
 11.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. i. 23.  
 Rom. xi. 26.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. iii. 1.  
 Luke iii. 3.

<sup>p</sup> Matt. iii. 11.  
 Mark i. 7.

Luke iii. 16.  
 John i. 26, 27.

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23. "Raised unto Israel." So C., D., 13, most Cursives, Sah., Syriac, Arm.; but *N*, A., B., E., H., L., P., 61, almost sixty Cursives, Vulg., Copt., Æth., read, "brought unto Israel."

23. "Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel," &c. Here the speech of St. Paul answers to that of St. Peter (Acts ii. 30). He is speaking to Jews, and he first of all assures them that the Redeemer came amongst them, not of some unknown family, but of the family of David. He and his brother Apostle speak of this so confidently, that we may be sure that the lineage of Jesus through Joseph and the Virgin up to David, was known and acknowledged.

24, 25. "When John had first preached . . . whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose." The fame of John seems to have penetrated far and wide through the dispersion, and all, whether living in Judæa, or in the cities of the Gentiles, acknowledged him to be a prophet. Naturally, then, St. Paul brings forward prominently his testimony to Christ, for though they might not know Him to Whom the Baptist pointed, if they acknowledged John as a prophet at all, they must believe that the Messiah was among them.

The Baptism of repentance which John preached was to prepare the way for Christ. It was preached to all the people of Israel. No prophet before his time had so drawn to him the whole nation, for all classes came under the lash of his severe reproofs; but John organized no sect, in no way asserted himself, but rather through his whole preaching recognized the supreme greatness of One then actually in their midst.

26. "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham. . . ."

Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, <sup>q</sup> to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, <sup>r</sup> because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets <sup>s</sup> which are read every sabbath day, <sup>t</sup> they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

<sup>q</sup> Matt. x.  
Luke xxiv. 47.  
ver. 46. ch.  
iii. 26.  
<sup>r</sup> Luke xxiii.  
34. ch. iii. 17.  
1 Cor. ii. 9.  
<sup>s</sup> ver. 14, 15.  
ch. xv. 21.  
<sup>t</sup> Luke xxiv.  
20, 44. ch.  
xxvi. 22. &  
xxviii. 23.

26. "To you is the word." So G., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Syriac (Schaaf), Copt., Arm., Æth.; but N, A., B., D., 13, 19, 33, 61, Sah., read, "to us."

this salvation sent." "To the Jew first." This speech or sermon is entirely to Jews, or to those proselytes who were, as far as could be, in the position of Jews.

"The word of this salvation." What this salvation is will be shortly explained by him.

27. "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers . . . condemning him." He lays the blame not on the Jews generally—not on the dispersion—but on those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, thus approaching them with the utmost conciliation.

"They knew him not." Thus St. Peter says, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

"Nor yet the voices of the prophets." The prophets proclaim a Messiah achieving His kingdom not by violence or self-exaltation, but by suffering. They proclaim that the kingdom of this Messiah will be spiritual ("I will put my law into their hearts, and write it in their minds"). They proclaim that the Messiah will do wonderful works of restoration and healing, and especially that His doctrine will be addressed, not to the educated classes, but to the poor. (Luke iv. 18.) They proclaim also that He will be more than a mere man, for He is to be the Son of God, in some unique sense. All these "voices" proclaimed the Man, Whom the Jews condemned and crucified, to be the Christ. But they knew not these voices, because they would not know them, and so they fulfilled them in condemning Him. Their condemnation of Him brought about that He should achieve forgiveness of all sin through the cruel death to which they brought Him, and through that "grave and gate of

28 " And though they found no cause of death *in him*, <sup>a</sup> yet

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxvii.  
22. Mark xv.  
13, 14. Luke  
xxiii. 21, 22.  
John xix. 6, 15.  
<sup>x</sup> ch. iii. 13, 14.  
<sup>y</sup> Luke xviii.  
31. & xxiv. 44.  
John xix. 28,  
30, 36, 37.

desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

<sup>z</sup> Matt. xxvii.  
59. Mark xv.  
46. Luke  
xxiii. 53.  
John xix. 38.

29 <sup>z</sup> And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, <sup>a</sup> they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxviii.  
6. ch. ii. 24.  
& iii. 13, 15,  
26. & v. 30.

30 " But God raised him from the dead :

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxviii.  
16. ch. i. 3.  
1 Cor. xv. 5,  
6, 7.

31 And <sup>b</sup> he was seen many days of them which

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death," pass to a Resurrection which should set the seal of God Himself to the truth of all that Jesus claimed to be.

28. " And though they found no cause of death *in him* . . . slain." They among themselves condemned Him for blasphemy, but because they knew that Pilate would listen to no such accusation, they accused the Lord before him of stirring up the people, of making Himself a king, and of calling Himself the Son of God.

" Desired they Pilate that he should be slain." It was only through their importunity that the Lord was brought to the cross. Pilate, as St. Peter says, was determined to let Him go.

29. " And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him," &c. Written, that is, in the prophets. They fulfilled their own wicked will, and, in doing so, they inflicted on the Lord a death which had all the signs and tokens by which the all-atoning Death could be discerned.

" Laid him in a sepulchre." I have noticed in my preface to St. Luke's Gospel what a peculiar stress St. Paul laid upon the Burial of the Lord. It was a special part of his Gospel that Our Lord "died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4), and also connecting it with the doctrine of Baptism: "We are buried with him by Baptism unto death." "Buried with him in Baptism" (Rom. vi. 4; Coloss. ii. 12).

30, 31. " But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them," &c. God raised Him from the dead. The doctrinal and practical bearing of this most pregnant assertion we shall consider under verses 38 and 39. The following words, "he was seen many days," &c., are exactly parallel to the words of his



came up with him <sup>c</sup> from Galilee to Jerusalem, <sup>d</sup> who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how

<sup>c</sup> ch. i. 11.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. i. 9. &  
ii. 32. & iii. 15.  
& v. 32.

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31. "Who are his witnesses." So B., E., H., L., P., most Cursives; but N, A., C., some Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Arm., read, "who now are his witnesses."

brother Apostle, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts ii. 32).

"Them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem," *i. e.*, those who knew Him best, and, we may add, those who loved Him best. It may be asked, Why did not God cause that His enemies should witness to His Resurrection, and not His friends? Because a very little consideration will convince us that the thing would be impossible. A man who professed to believe that God had raised up Jesus, and yet continued the enemy of Jesus, or even indifferent to Him, would have presented in his own person the most monstrous of anomalies. Every time he opened his mouth he would be asked, "If you really believe that God raised up Jesus in token that He was His Son and the Christ, why do you not take His side? You say that you believe, and you act as if the witness of God to the Resurrection was false. If you believe that God set the seal of the Resurrection to the claims of His Son, how can you think of opposing His Gospel?"

But God did reveal His Son to an enemy—even to the man who was now preaching, and instantly he became His firmest friend. It is remarkable, however, that in this discourse, so far as it is given in this book of the Acts, St. Paul says not a word of his own conversion; but prefers to rest the truth of the Lord's Christship entirely on the testimony of the first called Apostles. Such a man, we may be sure, though he would unflinchingly proclaim the truth, would be the last to raise up a party, and inaugurate a Pauline School as opposed to a Petrine, as certain German rationalists pretend.

32, 33. "And we declare unto you glad tidings . . . God hath fulfilled the same . . . this day have I begotten thee." The first words might be rendered: "We evangelize you—we declare the Gospel unto you, how that," &c.

This place requires careful notice because, with many others, it makes the Gospel to be, not the news of the Death, so much as the

\* Gen. iii. 15.  
& xii. 3. & xxii.  
18. ch. xxvi.  
6. Rom. iv.  
13. Gal. iii.  
16.

that "the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their

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33. "Unto us their children." So C.<sup>s</sup>, E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Arm.; but N, A., B., C., D., Vulg., Æth., &c., read, "unto our children."

news of the Resurrection from that Death. If any good Christian now were to be asked, "What is the Gospel?" the immense probability is that he would mention only the atonement and reconciliation brought about by the Death of Christ, and say not a word respecting His Resurrection; but here the Apostle makes the glad tidings, the Euangelion, to be the truth of the Resurrection: and it is evident that it must be so; for what good tidings would it have been to a Jew looking for the Messiah to tell him that that Messiah had been crucified? It would instantly have undone all reports of His miracles, even of the most stupendous. It would have taken the virtue out of every record of the holiness of His Life or the wisdom of His teaching. The Jew would instantly say: "A crucified man is a man who is hung on a tree, and so dies under the especial curse of God (Gal. iii. 13). God, if your Jesus had been the Messiah, would certainly have saved Him from such a death." But now by the Gospel of the Resurrection the case is altogether reversed. Since God raised from the dead One put to such a death, His must be the Death foretold by the prophets. That death was not a common death. It was the death of deaths—the one all-sufficient sacrificial Death. God has made the soul of the Crucified One an offering for sin, and the proof is that God raised Him from the dead. Now, according to the prophecy, "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

"The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same." The promise was manifold, but more particularly was it a promise of a king ruling in righteousness. This was by the Resurrection more than fulfilled, for now the Crucified One reigns from the throne of God—all things being put under His feet.

"As it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day," &c. The citation of this place is remarkable, and seems at first sight not at all appropriate; for Christ was, as to His Divine

children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also

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Nature the Eternal Word, Who was "in the beginning with God," and "by Whom all things were made." How, then, so very late in the world's history could it be said of Him, "This day have I begotten thee," seeing that "his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"?

Evidently because His Resurrection, being life from the dead, was, as it were, a second birth—a Regeneration.

The words, "this day have I begotten thee," have been always held to have a three-fold signification.

First, they refer to the Eternal Generation of the Son. This, being in eternity, is out of the bounds and limitations of time. To "the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity," there is one eternal now. A thousand years are in His sight as one day. "Before Abraham was, I am." So that in this transcendental sense this day is the eternal day of God's existence, having neither morning nor evening.

But, secondly, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in another sense applies these words of the Second Psalm to the Lord's Incarnation.

"Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" When the Son of God became Incarnate He became the Son of God in a new sense. The uncreated Son became as to His human nature—that nature in which He was to work out God's purposes of grace—a creature Son. He entered into creation and became the "first-born of every creature."

And in the third place, as St. Paul here teaches, these words are said of the Lord's Resurrection, and this can only be because His Resurrection, being life from the dead, was His new birth. This is brought out wonderfully well by that Apostolical preacher, Bourdaloue. "'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' What is the meaning of this, Christian? Of what day was St. Paul speaking? If he meant the day when Jesus Christ as Son of God and the Uncreated Word was begotten by His Father, why did he apply it to the mystery of the Resurrection? And if he meant the day when Jesus Christ, as the God-Man, was raised according to the flesh, why did he mention His eternal generation? What connection is there between the two?" "Ah!" replies St. Ambrose, "it is admirable, and never did the Apostles'

written in the second psalm, 'Thou art my Son, this day  
 have I begotten thee.

f Ps. ii. 7.  
 Heb. i. 5. &  
 v. 5.

thoughts follow each other more naturally. How so? Because in reality the Resurrection of Jesus Christ had been for Him a Second Birth, but much happier and more advantageous than the first, because in being born again, so to say, from the tomb, He had strikingly revealed in His Own Person that character of Son of God with which He was endued. And that is the reason why the Eternal Father particularly acknowledged Him in that mystery, addressing these words to Him with a special meaning: 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' 'Yes, My Son, it is on this day that I begat Thee the Second time, but in a way which will perfectly establish the greatness of thine origin, and the truth of that Divine Being that Thou hast received from Me. To-day hast Thou proved Thyself My Son.' As if He said unto Him: 'Whilst Thou wert upon earth, although Thou wert indisputably Son of God, Thou wert only regarded in the character of Son of Man; but now that Thou triumphest over death, and Thou art born again to the life of glory, Thou givest so unmistakable a token of the Divinity that dwells within Thee, that henceforth it can no longer be disputed or denied Thee.' "

The Saviour claimed to be God. If He had not been what He claimed to be, it was impossible that He should rise again, since God then, by aiding the miracle of His Resurrection, would have given His sanction to an imposture and a lie. If, then, after that declaration He rose again we must conclude from it that He was God; and being God all His miracles stand unquestioned, since it is natural to God to work miracles. And on the other hand, if He did not rise again, the belief in His Divinity would be destroyed, and His Divinity being destroyed His miracles could no longer stand, His words were only falsehoods, His life an artifice and an illusion, the whole Christian faith a phantom. Such is the literal meaning of St. Paul's words: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." All that, let me repeat, is because Jesus Christ had fixed upon the Resurrection of His Body as the distinctive token of His Divinity.

I have enlarged upon all this the more fully because the Gospel of this our day, in the minds of so many, is the Gospel of a Death

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, "I will give you the sure † mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*,  
 "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,

36 For David, || after he had served his own generation by the will of God, 'fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption :

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

\* Isai. lv. 3.  
 † Gr. *ta osia*,  
*holy*, or, *just*  
*things*: which  
 words the lxx.  
 both in the  
 place of Isai.  
 lv. 3. and in  
 many others,  
 use for that  
 which is in the  
 Hebrew,  
*mercies*.  
 † Ps. xvi. 10.  
 ch. ii. 31.  
 ‡ Or, *after he*  
*had in his own*  
*age served the*  
*will of God*,  
 ver. 22. Ps.  
 lxxviii. 72.  
 † 1 Kings ii.  
 10. ch. ii. 29.

rather than of a Resurrection. St. Paul calls the Resurrection his Gospel. (1 Cor. xv. 1-9, 2 Tim ii. 8.)

34. "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead . . . sure mercies of David." The word translated "mercies" is rather "holy things." "I will give unto you the holy things of David, the faithful ones." These holy things of David are particularly the eternal reign of righteousness set forth in the latter part of the 22nd and the 72nd and the 132nd Psalms. These promises, in anything like fulness, could not have been fulfilled without the Lord's Resurrection.

35, 36, 37. "Wherefore he saith also in another psalm . . . saw no corruption." Here also the parallel between the sermons of the two great Apostles is most striking, but St. Paul is more full on the fact that Christ's most holy Body was preserved from corruption. In fact, he seems to treat it as a part of that Resurrection, as, indeed, it is so treated in the sixteenth Psalm. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (*i. e.*, in the place of departed spirits), neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One (*i. e.*, the Body of thy Holy One) to see corruption."

"Served his own generation." But the spiritual David served by a higher will of God all generations.

The freedom from corruption of the Lord's most Holy Body was, of course, not a thing that could be seen as was the life in His risen Body. But Christ, as the Second Adam, having removed the curse of sin, was the only one of the race to whom it could not be said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

38 ¶ Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that <sup>k</sup> through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins :

<sup>k</sup> Jer. xxxi. 34.  
Dan. ix. 24.  
Luke xxiv.  
47. 1 John ii.  
12.

39 And <sup>l</sup> by him all that believe are justified

<sup>l</sup> Is. lii. 11.  
Rom. iii. 28.  
& viii. 3.  
Heb. vii. 19.

38. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that," &c. The first thing to be noticed in this verse is the particle "therefore," which connects its sense with the verse before, "he whom God raised again saw no corruption, *therefore* (on this account,) be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Here the preaching of the forgiveness of sins is made to depend directly on the incorruption of the Lord's Body. But why? What is the connection between the two? Evidently this. The Lord was raised in a Body which had not been touched by corruption, because He was the New Man, the Second Adam, and His Resurrection proved Him to be this. His Resurrection proved Him to be all that He had asserted Himself to be. He had asserted that He was the Life, therefore, His Resurrection proved Him to be the Life. He had asserted that He would give His life a ransom for the many, therefore, if He rose again He ransomed the many. Therefore, being proved by His Resurrection to be the Ransom and the Life of sinners, "through Him is preached the remission of sins."

39. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things," &c. This verse is far more emphatic if the order of the words in the Greek is preserved. "And from all things (from) which ye could not in the law of Moses be justified, in this man every one that believeth is justified." In each case I believe the *in* should be translated "in." "In Christ" corresponds to, "in the law of Moses," *i. e.*, not merely by the law as an instrument, but in the dispensation of Moses: only it is not said "in" Moses, because Moses does not permeate, as it were, his dispensation—is not its federal head—does not in himself personally include all his true followers, as Christ does His.

Justification has been said here to be forgiveness, but if we take the term *in* this man, *i. e.*, *in* Christ, to be the same, and to be used in the same wide sense as Christ used it in John vi. 56, and John xv. 2, 3, 4, &c., and as it is used in the Epistles of this Apostle, then it

from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in <sup>m</sup> the prophets;

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

<sup>m</sup> Isai. xxix.  
14. Hab. i. 5.

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means much more. It means not only forgiveness, but deliverance, deliverance from the power and the love of all evil things. The justification of St. Paul's after-teaching is Justification of Life (Rom. v. 18). It could not be through the law, or any law, for no mere law can give life (Gal. iii. 21). It has its spring not so much in Christ's Death as in His Resurrection (Rom. iv. 24, 25, v. 10).

"All that believe," because belief is the entrance into the whole state of blessings which Christ has brought down to us. If a heathen man has the Christ of the New Testament properly set before him, he will very shortly ask, what doth hinder me to be baptized? If he has the Christ of St. John's Gospel set before him, he will ask, when can I receive the Body and Blood of the Lord, that my union with Him may be assured and cemented? If he has the Christ of St. Paul set before him, he will regard his body as a member of Christ, and he will look upon the bodies and souls of his fellow Christians as incorporated into the same holy fellowship, and so he will "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," because "there is one body as well as one Spirit, and one hope of our calling."

40, 41. "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of, &c. . . . though a man declare it unto you." St. Paul here quotes the Septuagint translation of Habakkuk i. 5. It differs in one or two important respects from the Hebrew, but not so as to affect the Apostle's argument, which seems to be somewhat of this sort. God worked a work of vengeance upon the Jews in bringing upon them the Chaldæans. He gave them the most distinct warnings that He would do this, and yet they turned not, nor believed His prophets when they foretold the captivity, and so in these days, when Paul and his brother Apostles were declaring the work which God had worked in Christ, and the vengeance both temporal (in the destruction of the Jewish nation), and eternal (in

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

† Gr. in the week between, or, in the sabbath between.

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

n ch. xi. 23.  
& xiv. 22.

o Tit. ii. 11.

Heb. xii. 15.

l Pet. v. 12.

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42. An overwhelming number of authorities (N, A, B, C, D, E., many Cursives, Vulg., Sab., Copt., Syriac), read, "And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath."

the world to come), which God would bring upon despisers, they were in danger of stupidly wondering, with a wonder which would lead to no fleeing from the wrath to come, and so they would "wonder and perish."

If it be asked, how could the Apostles warn the Jews of Pisidia of a destruction impending principally on Jerusalem, we answer that the destruction of Jerusalem was the beginning of a tribulation which has lasted to the present time. In the insurrections and tumults which followed upon the overthrow of the Jewish nation, immense numbers of Jews in all parts of the world perished miserably.

And, of course, it is still more true of the vengeance which will overtake all rejecters and despisers of His Gospel, that they behold, wonder, and perish. They behold the effects of the Gospel, they wonder at its power over the hearts and lives of so many of their fellow Christians, and yet they die in their sins.

42. "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought," &c. The word "Jews" in the first clause of this verse, and the word Gentiles in the second seem to be interpolations. The correct reading is, probably, that of the Vulgate. "And as they went out, they asked that these words, *i. e.*, the same words, might be spoken to them on the Sabbath following." It is not necessary, of course, to suppose that all who heard made this request, but only those who had been convinced of the truth of the Apostle's message, as we learn from the next verse.

43. "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews," &c. We are not to think that this took place only on the Sab-



44 ¶ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and <sup>p</sup>spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

¶ ch. xviii. 6.  
1 Pet. iv. 4.  
Jude 10.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, <sup>q</sup>It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but <sup>r</sup>seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, <sup>s</sup>we turn to the Gentiles.

¶ Matt. x. 6.  
ch. iii. 25.  
ver. 26. Rom.  
i. 16.

¶ Ex. xxxii. 10.  
Deu. xxxii. 21.  
Isai. lv. 5.  
Matt. xxi. 43.  
Rom. x. 19.

¶ ch. xviii. 6.  
& xxviii. 28.

44. "Hear the word of God." So B., C., E., L., P., most Cursives, &c.; but N., A., and some Cursives, read, "the word of the Lord."

45. "Contradicting and blaspheming." "Contradicting and" omitted by N., A., B., C., L., many Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm.; retained by D., I., P., and most Cursives. E. reads a word of similar meaning *ἰναντιομασος*.

bath: it was probably the work of the whole week to instruct these persons further in the Gospel, and, probably, to baptize them.

44. "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together," &c. Probably into the market place, or some other place of public resort, for we must presume that the synagogue could not contain "almost the whole city."

45. "But when the Jews saw the multitudes," &c. Their envy was probably excited, not by the fact that Christ was preached to the Gentiles, but that He was preached for their immediate acceptance, so that they need not be circumcised and keep the law in order to enjoy the promises of the Gospel.

46. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary," &c. It seems to have been a first principle that wherever there was a synagogue of the Jews, the Gospel should *first* be proclaimed in it. This was probably derived from the saying of the Lord, "go *rather* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The rule was "to the Jew first," and then "to the Greek."

"Judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life," &c. These words seem spoken in a sort of irony. Eternal life in Christ was offered to them, and this is so inconceivably great a thing, that if they

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, 'I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

<sup>c</sup> Isai. xlii. 6.  
& xlix. 6.  
Luke ii. 32.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

rejected the offer the Apostle assumes that they considered themselves unworthy of it.

47. "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee," &c. This is a very direct prophecy of the Lord Himself, and contains no explicit command to preach the Gospel, but inasmuch as in this matter of the proclamation of salvation to the Gentiles, Christ preached it not Himself, but entirely through those whom He sent, if He is set by God as a light to the Gentiles, there is an implicit command that those who act in His Name and by His commission should evangelize the heathen.

48. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad," &c. To the well-disposed amongst the Gentiles the words of St. Paul would be the first clear revelation they had ever received respecting "everlasting life after death," and so they naturally rejoiced, and glorified the word which had first excited within them well-grounded hopes of a blessed immortality.

"And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." This place is treated by all commentators as a predestinarian text, and so some harshly emphasize its seeming exclusiveness, as if God allowed the great offers of salvation to be made publicly in the ears of all the Gentiles, whilst all the time He had secretly ordained that only a limited number should be capable of receiving the saving truth. Others, on the contrary, plead for free will—that the decree of God and the freedom of the human spirit in accepting or rejecting salvation by Christ are both true, and in the sight of God reconcilable both with His justice and with His mercy, though He has not been pleased to reveal to us the mode of the reconciliation. I humbly submit the following to the reader.

The word translated ordained (*τεταγμένοι*) has no predestinarian sense whatsoever. It is not used in any predestinarian context, as in Rom. viii. 29, 30, or 1 Pet. i. 1-6. It has no meaning of "long

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and <sup>2</sup>raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled <sup>2</sup> Tim. iii. 11. them out of their coasts.

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50. "The devout and honourable women." "And" omitted by B., C., D., some Cursives, Sah., Copt., Syriac; but retained by N., E., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Æth. "The devout women of honourable estate," Revisers.

beforehand" connected with it, for it has no *πρό* in it, as the predestinarian or supposed predestinarian words, *πρόθεσις*, *προέγνω*, *προώρισε*, have. It means simply "set in order," and so "disposed," not taking into account the person or thing which disposes the soul. Thus it may be used in contrast to the assertion respecting the unbelieving Jews in verse 46, that they held themselves unworthy of eternal life, and so were indisposed to accept the Gospel, whereas these Gentiles, on the contrary, held themselves to have the promise of eternal life, and so were disposed towards it. Anyhow there is no reference whatsoever to any disposing cause in the shape of a decree of God with reference to particular souls in the past eternity.

Who or what was it, then, which disposed the hearts of these Gentiles to accept the Gospel? Undoubtedly the grace of God; but whether such grace was dependent wholly on a preceding decree of God, or was called into action by the then state or disposition of each soul is left untouched by this declaration of the Evangelist.

49. "And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region." This implies, of course, that many days and journeyings were spent in Evangelistic work.

50. "But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women," &c. If the female proselytes were as numerous in proportion as they were at Damascus, their influence must have been very great, for, according to Josephus ("Jewish Wars," ii. 20-2) the majority of the wives of the Damascenes were proselytes. Lewin quotes a remarkable passage from Strabo bearing upon the religious influences of the women in these parts. "Everybody considers that the women are the leaders of the superstition, for they summon their husbands to take part in the more extensive services of the Gods, and the festivals and sacred invocations."

51 'But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

γ Matt. x. 14.  
Mark vi. 11.  
Luke ix. 5.  
ch. xviii. 6.

52 And the disciples \*were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

\* Matt. v. 12.  
John xvi. 22.  
ch. ii. 46.

51, 52. "But they shook off the dust of their feet against them . . . with the Holy Ghost." "Against them," that is, against those, probably the large majority, who rejected the message of salvation. But still they left many sincere converts in the city, whom God rewarded for their constancy in the midst of the gainsayers by filling them with joy, and with the Holy Ghost. This was not, however, a final giving up of the city, as of a place respecting which there was no hope, for they visited it again, as is related in the next chapter (xiv. 21).

Iconium has been called the Damascus of Lycaonia. It is pleasantly situated on the western verge of the largest plain of Asia Minor, and, like Damascus, is an oasis in the desert. The rills that flow from the mountain range on the west side of the city irrigate for a little distance the low grounds which stretch away to the east; and gardens and orchards are seen in luxuriance. But soon the water, the source of vegetation, is exhausted; and from that limit commences the dry, barren, comfortless plains of Lycaonia.

But if Iconium be a city of Lycaonia, why does the penman of the Acts say presently that "when they left Iconium they fled into Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia"? The passage certainly does not affirm positively that Iconium was not a city of Lycaonia, but the form of the expression rather implies it. Whatever was the origin of Iconium—whether Lycaonian, Phrygian, or Pisidian—it is sufficient to say, in justification of St. Luke, that Iconium, at the time of the Apostles' visit, formed, with the country about it, a separate and independent principality, governed by a ruler with the title of Tetrarch. In the time of Augustus, Polemo had the tetrarchy, and after him Amyntas, king of Galatia; and in the time of Pliny it was still a distinct tetrarchy, for he observes: "There is also commonly given a tetrarchy carved out of Lycaonia, where it borders on Galatia, composed of fourteen townships, Iconiura being the capital." (Lewin, p. 144.)

## CHAP. XIV.

AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, <sup>a</sup> which gave testimony unto the word of <sup>a</sup> Mark xvi. his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be <sup>20.</sup> Heb. ii. 4. done by their hands.

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2. "The unbelieving Jews." So Vulg., "increduli." Revisers translate, "The Jews that were disobedient;" but the former accords more with common sense.

3. "And granted," perhaps "by granting" (omitting *καὶ* with A., B., D.).

1, 2. "And it came to pass in Iconium . . . evil affected against the brethren." Here, again, they observed the principle or rule "to the Jew first." It was only natural to begin with those who had the knowledge of the true God, and to whom especially the promises belonged; but in doing this they knew full well that they would excite the hatred of the bigoted Pharisaical section.

3. "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord." These signs and wonders confirmed the word of grace which had been just preached. They did not apparently begin with miracles; but their doctrine having found a lodgment in the breasts of those that were disposed to receive the truth, God left them not without witness.

It is impossible to suppose that they could call upon all men everywhere, on their mere unsupported word, to believe that, through the Blood of a crucified Man, forgiveness of sins was given to all who repented and believed, and that, through this Man, God would raise all men from the dead, and judge them at the last day. There must be some visible proof from the unseen and eternal God to confirm such teaching; and God gave them this in the

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part <sup>b</sup> ch. xiii. 3. held with the Jews, and part with the <sup>b</sup> apostles.

5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, <sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 11. <sup>c</sup> to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them,

<sup>d</sup> Matt. x. 23. 6 They were ware of *it*, and <sup>d</sup> fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the Gospel.

<sup>e</sup> ch. iii. 2. 8 ¶ <sup>e</sup> And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding <sup>f</sup> Matt. viii. 10. & ix. 28, 29. him, and <sup>f</sup> perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

miracles of healing which He enabled them to work. These miracles, however, did not compel belief, for we read:

4. "But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with," &c. How did the Jews neutralize the effect of the signs and wonders? They could not deny that they were performed, but they ascribed them, as the Jews who opposed our Lord did, to the power of the evil one—to sorcery and magic.

5, 6, 7. "And when there was an assault . . . there they preached the Gospel." Lystra and Derbe were cities of Lycaonia proper, not within the principality of which Iconium was the chief city.

8. "And there sat a certain man at Lystra." This miracle is identical in its main features with that recorded as performed by St. Peter in Acts iii. 2, &c. There is one very important difference, however. The lame man healed by St. Peter had not heard him preach, and looked up to him, expecting only to receive alms. Of this man it is said:

9. "The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him . . . faith to be healed." He had been struck by the preaching of the Gospel, and had received it with some degree of faith, which Paul, having amongst other gifts the power of discerning spirits, at

10 Said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked." § Isai. xxxv. 6.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." h ch. viii. 10.  
k xxviii. 6.

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once recognized as presenting an opportunity for confirming the Word of God by the sign of the Divine power.

10. "Said with a loud voice; Stand upright on thy feet." To command him to do this was to command him to do, on the faith of the power of the Lord, an act which he had never done before—for he had never walked. In faith he obeyed, and as he obeyed strength flowed into him, and he leaped and walked.

11. "And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices." Two observations suggest themselves here.

1. This Lycaonian city was the most likely place for an exclamation such as this on the part of the crowd, for they were a semi-barbarous, unsophisticated people, who were probably not steeped in the infidelity of their politer neighbours respecting the existence of anything supernatural, and they had in their local legends two cases of the heathen deities appearing to men in human form, viz., that of Jupiter coming amongst men as one of themselves to see if the wickedness of man was such as had been reported; and the other in which Jupiter and Mercury sought hospitality amongst them, and were denied it by all except an aged couple, whose house, in reward for their kindness, they turned into a temple, and made them the priest and priestess of it, and granted to them that they should not have the grief of seeing one another die, which was accomplished by their becoming trees at the moment of death. This latter is a beautiful legend, and might have furnished St. Paul with some lesson like that of Hebrews xiii. 2, if he had not held the intensely wicked system in such utter abomination.

2. Then, in the next place, this is the one single instance in which the gods of Greece and Rome are mentioned by name. In this matter the New Testament stands in marked contrast with the Old, in which constant reference is made by the prophets to the gods of the surrounding nations and their worship; to Baal, Ashtaroth, Dagon, Moloch, Nebo, and others, whereas in this

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city,

13. "Which was before their city" (see below).

one place alone is any god of Greece and Rome named by name;<sup>1</sup> and yet the Apostle came in contact with their cultus far more directly than the prophets of old with that of the false gods of Canaan and Moab. It was the commission of the prophets to keep the chosen people in their own land free from idolatry. It was the commission of the Apostles to attack heathenism in its strongholds in such cities as Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome, and subdue it by the preaching of the Cross. Now no system ever invented by man, or rather, perhaps, inspired by Satan, has been so successful in addressing itself to his depraved imagination, and embodying the highest ideas of beauty of form in its sculpture, chastened grandeur in its architecture, and the loftiest inspiration of creative genius in its poetry, as the mythology of Greece. Were, then, the Apostles insensible to all this? We cannot believe that they were, and yet they turned from it, they ignored its existence, they named it not, because with their views of God and His holy Will and Character, they regarded it as essentially impure and polluting—incapable of regeneration or adaptation to Christian uses; unfit even for the illustration of good and holy things.

12. "And they called Barnabas, Jupiter." No doubt because his was the more commanding presence.

"And Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker."

"Mercuri facunde nepos Atlantis."

The personal aspect of St. Paul was comparatively insignificant. Thus he described his enemies as saying of him that "his letters were weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible."

13. "Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands," &c. Literally, the priest of the Jupiter or Zeus which was before the city. Alford's note is "*i.e.* of Zeus propylos. No ellipsis of *ιερου* or anything else." Others, as Howson, take *ιερου* to be understood. "The priest attached to that temple of Jupiter which was before the city gates."

<sup>1</sup> The naming of Diana of the Ephesians is not a case in point, for that was a worship of personified nature.



brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, <sup>1</sup> and would have done sacrifice with the people.

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ii. 46.

14 *Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, <sup>k</sup> they rent their clothes, and ran <sup>k</sup> Matt xvi. 65. in among the people, crying out,

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14. "Ran in." So H., L., P., most Cursives; but K., A., B., C., D., E., and some Cursives, read, "ran out."

"Oxen and garlands." The garlands were of white wool, sometimes interwoven with flowers and leaves. Tertullian writes, "The very victims and altars, the very ministers and the priests are crowned" [*i.e.* with these vittæ or garlands].

14. "Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes," &c. They rent their clothes in horror that they should be taken for false gods, and have the sacrifices due only to the supreme God offered to them.

A singular use has been made of this passage to bear out the idea that the gift of tongues was for purposes of ecstatic devotion, not to enable them to preach the Gospel more readily to the various tribes of men to whom God sent them. It is assumed that the Apostles did not understand the rude speech of the Lycaonians when they cried out at the first, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," and that it was only when they perceived the sacrificial procession at their doors that they knew that they had been taken for false gods.

But in common with many commentators, such as Wordsworth and Blunt, I cannot gather any such inference. The Apostles, I believe, perfectly understood the meaning of the shout of the populace, but it was only when that shout took effect in the offering at their very gates of idolatrous worship, that they could interfere by rejecting it with horror. They could hardly rush amongst the rabble with counter-shouts disclaiming their divinity. They left that to their teaching and preaching, which would soon disprove any such assertion. We believe, then, that they understood the speech of Lycaonia, and that they preached in it, and in the dialect of every other country in which they sojourned for missionary purposes. I, for one, cannot understand how so many expositors should have entertained the idea that the gift of speaking in divers languages was not given for the one purpose for which it seems to be adapted, *i.e.*, to make known the truth to men of

15 And saying, Sirs, <sup>1</sup> why do ye these things? <sup>m</sup> We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from <sup>n</sup> these vanities <sup>o</sup> unto the living God, <sup>p</sup> which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein :

<sup>1</sup> ch. x. 26.

<sup>m</sup> Jam. v. 17.

Rev. xix. 10.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. xii.

21. 1 Kings

xvi. 13. Jer.

xiv. 22. Amos

ii. 4. 1 Cor.

viii 4.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Thes. i. 9.

<sup>p</sup> Gen. i. 1.

Ps. xxxiii. 6.

& cxlvi. 6.

Rev. xiv. 7.

<sup>q</sup> Ps. lxxxii. 12.

ch. xvii. 30.

1 Pet. iv. 3.

16 <sup>q</sup> Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

other tongues, but that it was given for the expression of devotion. Why should the most ecstatic devotion be expressed in any other language than a man's native tongue? There is this proof that the Apostles used the gift of tongues for missionary purposes, that not a word is said about their learning the language of a country before they began to preach to its inhabitants, whereas if you take up the life or journal of any modern missionary, you will find that he had to spend many months, and in some cases years, in learning the language before he was able to preach a sermon in it.

15. "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions," &c. "Men of like passions," passions, of course, used in the old sense of sufferings. We are subject to the same diseases, accidents, sufferings, and death as ye are. Compare St. James's words, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are."

"Turn from these vanities unto the living God." Mark how he applies no harsher word than "vanities" to the false gods and their worship. They had been brought up in this miserable religion, and so were not guilty like those who had embraced it of their own free will.

"Unto the living God." The gods of the heathen being creatures of a depraved imagination, were non-existent and so as it were dead, whereas the God Whom Paul preached was emphatically One Who had life in Himself and gave life to all.

16. "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." This is parallel to the words of the Apostle to the Athenians, "The times of this ignorance God winked at." If He thus suffered them without such manifestations of Himself as He gave

17 <sup>r</sup> Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and <sup>a</sup> gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

19 ¶ <sup>t</sup> And there came thither *certain* Jews <sup>t</sup> from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the

<sup>r</sup> ch. xvii. 21.  
Rom. i. 20.  
<sup>a</sup> Lev. xxvi. 4.  
Deut. xi. 14.  
& xxviii. 12.  
Job v. 10. Ps.  
lxx. 10. &  
lxxviii. 9. &  
cxlviii. 8.  
Jer. xiv. 22.  
Matt. v. 45.  
<sup>t</sup> ch. xiii. 45.

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17. "Gave us rain." So most Cursives; but N, B., C., D., E., H., L., P., read, "gave you rain."

17. "Filling our hearts." So A., H., L., P., most Cursives, Copt., Æth.; but N, B., C., D., E., Vulg. (Amiat.), &c., read, "your hearts."

to the Jews to walk in their own way, He will not, we trust, call them to the same strict account as He will call those who have had through Revelation a clearer knowledge of His Character and Will.

17. "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good," &c. Some think that they discern a sort of rhythmical cadence in this verse, as if it were part of a sacred ode or hymn to the supreme Giver of all good. Others, I think with more reason, suppose a reminiscence of Jeremiah xiv. 22, "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Art not thou he, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee, for thou hast made all these things."

"Fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." There is a joyousness about these words as if the goodness of God in the gifts of grace in no way dimmed the witness to His loving-kindness in the gifts of nature, as it is with some. It may be paralleled with—"Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.)

18, 19. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people . . . supposing he had been dead." What a change, and apparently in the same persons, for "the people" are mentioned in each verse. They would have worshipped Paul as a god if he had permitted them, and now they stoned him. Very probably it was the

people, "and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city,

<sup>u</sup> 2 Cor. 11, 25. supposing he had been dead.  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. iii. 11.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

revulsion of feeling brought on by disappointment. He disclaimed being a god, and he taught them that it degraded them to worship the gods. Of course these people were the ignorant masses, those quickly excited, and ready to follow wherever their passions at the moment led them.

It has been noticed that almost every persecution of the Apostles was incited by the Jews. Why such unrelenting hate? It was not because St. Paul preached Jesus, but because he preached Jesus as the common Saviour of all—in Whom all, whether circumcised or not, had an equal interest.

"Having stoned Paul." Though often in danger of this fearful punishment, this was the only time that Paul was actually stoned. It is alluded to in 2 Cor. xi. 25, in the words "once was I stoned."

20. "Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came," &c. This is told as if there was something miraculous in his recovery, so that he should so soon resume his journey. That he should have been so stunned as to have been to all appearance dead, then rise up again, evidently without help, come into the city, and the next day depart to Derbe as if nothing had happened, partakes far more of the nature of a miraculous, than of an ordinary occurrence. One writer supposes that the Apostle had this extraordinary deliverance from death in his mind when he wrote, "As dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed" (2 Cor. vi. 9).

"To Derbe," a city about twenty miles south-east of Lystra. It is supposed to be represented by the modern Divle, but the sites of neither Lystra nor Derbe can now be identified with any certainty.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find all that bears upon the site of Derbe discussed in a note in Lewin's "Life of St. Paul," chap. viii. p. 151. There seems to be more certainty respecting the site of Lystra. "The ruins of Lystra remain, and are called Bin-bir Kilisseh, or, The thousand and one Churches, from the traces still visible of the numerous sacred edifices with which it was once adorned. Its glory has departed, but under the Byzantine emperors it was a place of importance and an episcopal see," p. 148.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city  
 \* and † had taught many, they returned again to  
 Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

\* Matt. xxviii.  
 19.  
 † Gr. *And made  
 many disciples.*

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and  
 † exhorting them to continue in the faith, and  
 that † we must through much tribulation enter  
 into the kingdom of God.

† ch. xi. 23.  
 & xiii. 43.  
 \* Matt. x. 38.  
 & xvi. 24.  
 Luke xxii. 28.  
 29. Rom. viii.  
 17. 2 Tim. ii.  
 11, 12. & iii. 12.

21, 22. "And when they had preached the Gospel to that city . . . enter into the kingdom of God." Taught many—literally and more accurately, made many disciples, *i. e.*, enrolled them in the Church by Baptism. It is the strict carrying out of Matth. xxviii., "Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and then "teaching them to observe all things," &c.

"Confirming the souls of the disciples," that is, by their teaching and exhortation; confirming in the sense of administering the laying on of hands must not be excluded, but at that early period "confirming" was rather associated with the conveyance of specific gifts of the Spirit. The sight of the reception of such gifts would, of course, confirm them in the faith.

"Exhorting them to continue in the faith." Not in faith merely, but in *the* faith of the Gospel, in "the faith once delivered to the saints."

"And that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." It is remarkable that in his second Epistle to Timothy, who came from these parts, the Apostle not only reproduces this saying as if it were an axiom or first principle of Christianity, but associates with it the very names of the cities where in person he had suffered so much. "Thou hast fully known my . . . persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 11, 12).

Quesnel writes very strongly indeed upon this. "There is no salvation to be attained now but by the Cross. Man, in the state of innocence, went to God by a way of ease, pleasure, and greatness; but since his fall, he has no other way to be saved, but that of

23 And when they had \*ordained them elders in every  
\* Tit. i. 5. church, and had prayed with fasting, they com-  
 mended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they  
 came to Pamphylia.

labour, suffering, and humiliation, at least in the disposition of his heart. This is a fundamental truth, which ought to regulate the whole life. Happy that person who has it deeply engraved on his heart."

23. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting." These elders were no doubt the elders of Acts xxi. 18, and of Titus i. 5, and were at that time the overseers or bishops of congregations, which must have been generally small, because meeting only in rooms of houses. The episcopal functions over the various congregations of a place or district such as our bishops now exercise, were as yet kept by the Apostle in his own hands, and exercised by him through his delegates. It is a question whether they were called elders, because usually older, and so, it is presumed, experienced men, or whether the name had become official, as it were, just as the word "senator" might be applied to those not old in years. As to their qualifications or particular functions, nothing is said here, for we must remember that the Apostolic laying on of hands imparted gifts of the Spirit for ruling or teaching which supplied the place of merely human talents or learning. Whether they were chosen by the people is also a disputed point. It is extremely unlikely that they were, though it is equally unlikely that they were appointed without reference to the approval of those over whom they were set, who must have been the best judges of their previous character and manner of life.

"And had prayed with fasting." This union of prayer with fasting as a sign of earnestness and determined will, was the rule in the Ancient Church. Our ember days are a witness of the custom.

"They commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." That is, the Lord Jesus, to Whom, as to God, they commended their souls—a very clear proof of their realizing belief in the Lord's Godhead.

24. "And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

26 And thence sailed to Antioch,<sup>b</sup> from whence they had been<sup>c</sup> recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together,<sup>d</sup> they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had<sup>e</sup> opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xiii. 1, 3.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. xv. 40.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. xv. 4, 12.  
& xxi. 19.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 9.  
2 Cor. ii. 12.  
Col. iv. 3.  
Rev. iii. 8.

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Pamphylia." Pisidia was a small inland province to the south-west of Lycaonia, and Pamphylia another between Pisidia and the sea.

25. "And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia." Perga was the place where Mark had left them. Attalia (now Adalia), was the principal port of Pamphylia. There is nothing said of their having preached before at this place, so probably they only passed through it on commencing their journey.

26. "And thence sailed to Antioch." No doubt disembarking at Seleucia.

"From whence they had been recommended to the grace of God." This seems not so much to refer to their ordination, as to prayer and benediction, on their departure.

There is a similar expression used in the next chapter, xv. 40.

Though Apostles and under the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost they seem, in a sense, to have been the missionaries of the Church of Antioch, and it is not improbable that this Church contributed largely to their support in their journey.

27. "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together," &c. The Church of Antioch had probably heard nothing of them or of their work for between two and three years. They recounted to them many stupendous miracles, of which the healing of the cripple at Lystra was but one. They gave accounts of numerous conversions, each one of which was as much a miracle, though its sphere was the soul, as the healing of diseases. And they gave the dark, the reverse side, how that everywhere they encountered the unrelenting enmity of their own co-religionists.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

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28. "And there they abode." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Sah., Copt.; but N, A, B, C, D., many Cursives, Vulg., Arm., Æth., omit "there."

28. "And there they abode long time with the disciples." There is some difference amongst commentators on this Book of the Acts respecting the time occupied by the first journey, and the conclusion of this "long time" here mentioned. Lewin considers that between the visit of SS. Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem with the alms of the Gentiles, xi. 30, and the commencement of the second missionary journey of xv. 41, there was an interval of four years, whilst Howson considers it to have been more than six years. Both make the return from Jerusalem after carrying up the alms to be in A.D. 44, but Lewin considers the date of the council to be A.D. 48, and Howson A.D. 51. For a reason which will be given at the beginning of the next chapter I incline to the longer period.

## CHAP. XV.

### INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS ON CIRCUMCISION.

AND <sup>a</sup> certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, *and said*, <sup>b</sup> Except ye be circumcised

<sup>a</sup> Gal. ii. 12.      <sup>c</sup> after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

<sup>b</sup> John vii. 22.

ver. 5. Gal.

v. 2. Phil. iii.

2. Col. ii. 8,

11, 16.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. xvii. 10.

Lev. xii. 3.

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We now come to the account of the first serious disagreement in the early church, and the council, or rather meeting of the Church of Jerusalem, by which it was in a measure set at rest.

Before doing this, however, it will be necessary to consider two questions. 1. Was the visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem for the purpose of attending this council the same as the journey recorded in



Gal. ii. 1-10? Notwithstanding the very general consent of commentators that it was the same, I cannot, I confess, fall in with this view, and for this reason, that there is nothing whatsoever said in the Epistle respecting the council and its decision. From the Epistle we should certainly gather that St. Paul went up, not sent by the Church of Antioch, but by special revelation, and that he laid his views not before the whole church, apostles, elders, and brethren, but before "Those who were of reputation," Peter, James, and John. Nothing whatsoever is said about either the council or its decrees, which was the one thing of supreme importance, for it was the formal decision of the Church upon the point in dispute. I cannot help thinking, then, that the journey of Gal. ii. 1, took place previously to the council, at some time within the "long time" indicated in Acts xiv. 28, and that though it was successful in bringing about a private understanding between St. Paul and the Apostles at Jerusalem, it failed to bring peace to the Church.

2. But another question of far more importance requires to be considered. What was the reason for the extraordinary vehemence with which St. Paul resisted the imposition of circumcision upon the Gentile converts? It is absurd to suppose that this determined opposition on his part arose merely out of the ritual bearing of circumcision, as, for instance, that it made the man who subjected himself to it a debtor to keep the whole law, which law was so exceedingly burdensome in its ceremonial exactions that St. Peter himself called it "a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." St. Paul, in three most memorable passages, proclaims a state of circumcision and a state of uncircumcision to be alike indifferent. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. vi. 15). "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. vii. 19). And yet he treated the willing submission of a Gentile to this "nothing" as absolute apostasy which cut a man off from the benefits of Christ's Redemption: "I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law (and the Galatian who received circumcision, by so doing professed that Christ was not sufficient for justification, but that he must be circum-

cised to be justified by the law,) ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 2, 3, 4). Again, "if righteousness come by the law (*i. e.*, by that status into which a man is brought by circumcision) Christ is dead in vain," and they who thus submit to circumcision if they have in time past suffered anything for Christ, have suffered it in vain (Gal. iii. 4). So that here is a thing at one time treated as "nothing," a thing of no consequence, and yet at another moment the submission to it is treated as virtual, if not actual, apostasy. Now the reconciliation of this is not far to seek. Circumcision considered as a mere ceremony was nothing. Its pain was but for a day or two. Its physical effects lasted but a short time: but the Judaizer who preached it, and the Galatian who submitted to it, understood it as something very different to a mere ceremony. It was the sign and seal of a covenant—of God's everlasting covenant with Abraham and his seed. "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant" (Gen. xvii. 13). Why then was it abrogated in the case of the Gentiles? Simply because God in the Person of His Son had brought in "a new and better covenant," which covenant, because it was in His Son, sealed by His Blood, must of necessity be perfect and all-sufficient for all purposes for which God can enter into covenant with man. No man, then, who realized that Christ was the Son of the living God, and that the Covenant was in Him, and that Abraham, and Moses, and David, and all the prophets were but servants, could possibly desire circumcision in addition to Baptism. If he did, he could not possibly believe in the Divine Greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ—I mean, of course, if he did so intelligently, knowing what he was doing. As St. Paul says, "having begun in the Spirit," he committed the folly of looking to be "made perfect in the flesh" (Gal. iii. 3). He had begun in the Spirit by a faith in God's Only-Begotten which led him, in Baptism, to Incorporation into His mystical Body, and he sought to perfect this by a rite which had only a typical significance and no promise of spiritual grace whatsoever attached to it. He had received the circumcision made without hands, which consisted in a Sacramental Burial and Resurrection with Christ, the Eternal Son, and he sought the circumcision made with hands, which had no promise of union with Christ attached to it (Coloss. ii. 11, 12). He had received the Substance, and he sought to be perfected by the shadow. (Coloss. ii. 16, 17.) Such going back was the sign of real unbelief, and so the Apostle treated

it as apostasy. The sign of the new covenant, and the sign of the old could not possibly exist together in the same system—for if the one was the sacrament of faith, the other was the sign of the opposite of true faith ruling in the soul,<sup>1</sup> because he who received it by doing so declared his unbelief in the all-sufficing Christ. Such was the theory, as it were, of the essential difference. If it be objected that I have not laid sufficient stress upon the ritual burden, which is treated by St. Peter as a very heavy infliction, I answer that the burdensomeness or bondage of the ritual was itself typical of the imperfection of the Jewish system. It taught or should have taught the Jews that they were not free—because the Son had not as yet made them free, they were not free indeed. So that to receive circumcision was virtually to deny that the Son had made them free, or was willing, if they came to Him, so to do.

These preliminary remarks will now prepare us for the better understanding of the chapter.

1. "And certain men which came down from Judæa, taught the brethren," &c. From Judæa, doubtless principally from Jerusalem, but the reader will remember that the Pharisees of other parts, as of Galilee, opposed the Lord bitterly.

"Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses." "After the manner of Moses" seems to mean Judaically, with the accompanying rites, &c., which made it a Jewish religious form—for Gentile nations, as the ancient Egyptians, observed it.

"Ye cannot be saved." No doubt they spoke very confidently, appealing to such places as Genesis xvii. 14, "The uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant," and no doubt they were met by St. Paul, and those taught by him, with the irrefragable arguments found in his Epistles: first, that the father of the faithful was accepted by God when he believed long before he was circumcised; and secondly, that God brought in, in His Son, a new and better covenant which was to supersede the old, and the

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<sup>1</sup> There is a very deep and learned argument to be found in the Rev. J. H. Newman's "History of the Arians," chap. i., showing that Arianism, which was a disparagement of the Divine Greatness of Christ, really had its roots in Judaizing. It is too long to be reproduced here, and will scarcely bear epitomizing, but the connecting links are thoroughly made out.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that  
d Gal. ii. 1. <sup>d</sup> Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

e Rom. xv. 24. 3 And <sup>e</sup> being brought on their way by the  
1 Cor. xvi. 6, church, they passed through Phenice and Sama-  
11. ria, <sup>f</sup> declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and  
f ch. xiv. 27. they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

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outward sign of this was the Sacrament of Baptism, which was to take the place of circumcision.

2. "When therefore Paul and Barnabas . . . about this question." The disturbers of the peace of the Church had come up from Jerusalem, and probably pretended to act on the authority of the Apostles.

"They determined that Paul and Barnabas," &c. If this journey be the same as that of Galatians ii. 1, then the "revelation" was not to the Apostles but to the whole Church. I think, however, that St. Paul would have expressly mentioned that such had been the case, as the fact would have been on his side.

"Certain other of them," &c. If the journey be the same as that of Gal. ii., Titus would have been of the number, but the fact that nothing is said respecting him is against the identity of the journies. According to the obvious meaning of Gal. ii. 1, Titus was not sent by the Church, but was taken by Paul, perhaps that the necessity of the circumcision of a Gentile might be tested in his case.

3. "And being brought on their way by the church," &c. This has been supposed to mean that some representatives of the Church of Antioch accompanied them, but does it not rather mean, that as they had parted with all their property they were supported on their journey by the contributions of the Church?

"They passed through Phenice and Samaria," &c. That is, they passed from Seleucia by the coast till they reached Phenice, and then turned to the east, passed through Samaria, and then to Jerusalem.

"Declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy," &c. The account of the reception of the Gentiles into the

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

g ver. 12. ch. xiv. 27 & xxi. 19.

5 But there || rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, <sup>b</sup> That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

] Or, rose up, said they, certain. h ver. 1.

6 ¶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, <sup>i</sup> Men and brethren, ye

i ch. x. 20. & xi. 12.

Church was received with joy by these churches, instead of with jealousy as by the Judaizers.

4. "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church," &c. This seems to imply a gathering together of the members of the various Christian assemblies under the elders, or presidents, of the various congregations, and the Apostles as over all.

"They declared all things that God had done with them." They did not cite texts of Scripture or urge arguments respecting the right of all men to Christian liberty, but they declared how God had given the seal of miracles and wonders to the truth of their teaching.

5, 6. "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees . . . consider of this matter." These believing Pharisees renewed the demand for the circumcision of Gentile believers, notwithstanding all that they heard respecting the success with which God had so evidently accompanied the labours of Paul and Barnabas, and so were the immediate occasion for the calling of the council.

7. "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up," &c. The speech or address of St. Peter is very remarkable. There is no assumption of authority, even of Apostolic inspiration: neither is there any elaborate argument, or even reference to Scripture. It is rather an appeal to certain facts well known to all present, which facts, if their plain significance had been taken at all into account, would have prevented the present dispute and division.

know that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

\* 1 Chron. xxxiii. 9. ch. i. 24. 1 ch. x. 44. 8 And God, <sup>k</sup> which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, <sup>l</sup> giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

<sup>m</sup> Rom. x. 11. 9 <sup>m</sup> And put no difference between us and them, <sup>n</sup> purifying their hearts by faith.

<sup>n</sup> ch. x. 15, 28, 43. 1 Cor. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 22.

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7. "Among us." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives; but N., A., B., C., some Cursives, &c., read, "you"—"among you."

"Ye know how that a good while ago," literally "from ancient days." The baptism of Cornelius had occurred some eight years before; but as so short a time seems scarcely to require such an expression as "from ancient days," it has been supposed that St. Peter alludes to his commission from the Lord, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (Matth. xvi. 19.)

"God made choice among us [you], that the Gentiles by my mouth," &c. Though he claims no special Apostolic authority, as I said, yet he does naturally claim the authority of an election by God for such a purpose. Being chosen by God to admit for the first time an uncircumcised Gentile into the fold, he had more right to speak upon the subject than any other man, for God, Who appointed him to do this great thing, would assuredly guide him in the doing of it.

8. "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them," &c. St. Peter alludes to the account in Acts x. 44: "While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word;" and in Acts xi. 15: "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning."

9. "And put no difference between us and them, purifying," &c. Just as there was no difference made by God between Jew and Gentile in the matter of the more external manifestations of the Spirit, so the internal and spiritual work was the same, in the purification of the heart and conscience.

There may be here an allusion to the purification of their hearts as distinguished from the outward bodily purification which the Judaizers insisted on.

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

° Matt. xxiii.  
4. Gal. v. 1.

11 But <sup>p</sup> we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

p Rom. iii. 24.  
Ephes. ii. 8.  
Tit. ii. 11. &  
iii. 4, 5.

12 ¶ Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had <sup>q</sup> wrought among the Gentiles by them.

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10. "To put a yoke," *i. e.* "by attempting to put a yoke."

11. "Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." "Christ" omitted by N, A., B., E., H., L., P., 61, fifty Cursives, Vulg. (Amiat.); but retained by C., D., 13, 31, many other Cursives, Syriac (Schaaf), &c.

10. "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck," &c. To tempt God seems here and elsewhere to mean to try whether He is in earnest respecting the carrying out of His will, and so to provoke Him to anger, for the expressed will of such a Being as God cannot be trifled with.

"To put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which . . . able to bear?" These words are as strong as any in the Epistle to the Galatians. It is a great mistake to imagine that St. Peter here alludes to the glosses and additions to the law of the Scribes and Pharisees through their traditions. He alludes to the Levitical Law itself as a burden imposed by God Himself, "till the time of reformation," *i. e.*, till the time of the giving of a new law of liberty in Christ (Heb. ix. 10).

11. "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," &c. The expression is remarkable. The Apostle asserts that not the Gentile only, but the Jew, is saved by grace. It is not by the grace of Jesus Christ they shall be saved as well as we, but *we* shall be saved as well as they. Salvation by grace is here opposed to salvation by the works of the law. The grace is the power of the new Life from Christ, which is bestowed freely on all who desire it, in order that they may do good works.

12. "Then all the multitude kept silence . . . among the Gentiles by them." Again, the Apostles appeal a second time to the wonders and signs by which God accompanied their preaching, as

13 ¶ And after they had held their peace, <sup>1</sup> James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

<sup>2</sup> ver. 7. 14 <sup>1</sup> Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

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

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14. "Simeon," more properly "Symeon."

witnessing to its truth; and what they preached was the freedom of the Gentiles from the bondage of the Mosaic Law.

13. "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren," &c. James, who presided over the Church of Jerusalem, now "summed up"—if we may use the expression,—and pronounced the sentence. He was the one man who could do it with authority, not merely from his position as president, but from his having retained beyond any man in the Apostolic circle (though he was not one of the Twelve) the confidence of the Jewish Christians. If he declared in favour of the liberty of the Gentile Christians there was an end of the matter; so far as authority was concerned, the Judaizers had no one else to look to.

14. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles," &c. Here he corroborates and expresses his approval of what St. Peter had said, though no words could express more strongly than St. Peter's the equality of Jews and Gentiles in the sight of God, as both alike recipients of the Holy Spirit, both alike purified by faith, both alike saved by grace.

"God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." Here St. James expresses the calling and election of the Gentiles in terms similar to those used by Hosea i. 6-11, and other prophets, to express the calling and election of Israel. First, Abraham had been visited, and his descendants chosen in him, and taken out of the surrounding heathen to be a "people for God's Name." And now God had done the same to the Gentiles. He had visited them through the Holy Spirit, acting in and through the Apostles, to separate them as thoroughly from idolatry and false worship as the seed of Abraham had been separated.

15, 16, 17. "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is



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

<sup>1</sup> Amos ix. 11,  
12.

written . . . who doeth all these things." This citation of Amos ix. 11 is in every way remarkable.

First, God says: "I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof."

Dr. Pusey, to whose note on this place in his "Minor Prophets" I desire to direct the reader's careful attention, writes: "He speaks of the house of David, not in any terms of royal greatness; he tells, not of its palaces, but of its ruins. Under the word *tabernacle* he probably blends the idea that it should be in a poor condition, and yet that it should be the means whereby God should protect His people. The *succah* (tabernacle, translated *booth* in Jonah) was originally a rude hut formed of intertwined branches. It is used of the cattle shed (Gen. xxxiii. 17), and of the rough tents used by soldiers in war (2 Sam. xi. 11), &c. The name of the feast of tabernacles, 'succoth,' as well as the rude temporary huts in which they were commanded to dwell, associated the name with a state of outward poverty under God's protection. . . . Amos had already foretold the destruction of the palaces of Jerusalem by fire (ii. 5). Now he adds that the abiding condition of the house of David should be a state of decay and weakness, and that from that state not human strength, but God Himself, should raise it. I will raise up the hut of David the fallen. . . . From these words of Amos, 'the son of the fallen,' became among the Jews one of the titles of the Christ. Both in the legal and mystical schools the words of Amos are alleged, in proof of the fallen condition of the house of David, when the Christ should come. 'Who would expect,' asks one, 'that God would raise up the fallen tabernacle of David that is fallen down. . . . This is no other than the King Messiah.'<sup>1</sup> And, in the Talmud: 'R. Nachman says to R. Isaac, Hast thou heard when the "son of the fallen" shall come? He answered, Who is he? R. Nachman answered: The Messiah. R. Isaac: Is the

<sup>1</sup> Bereshith Rabba, s. 83, quoted in Schoettgen.

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

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Messiah so called? R. Nachman: Yes. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen down.'"<sup>1</sup>

17. "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord." St. James here quotes the Septuagint as the version which would be most familiar to the great body of the Jews. They were, the bulk of them, not so well acquainted with the Hebrew of the Old Testament, which had been long a dead language, as with the Greek of the Septuagint, Greek being a living language known by all. But when we compare the Hebrew and the Septuagint we have to note a considerable difference. The Hebrew reads, "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen which are called by my name," &c. Whilst the Septuagint reads pretty nearly as reproduced by St. James—"That the remnant of men, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, may earnestly seek me."

The reconciliation is, that the Septuagint translators probably read "Adam," man, instead of "Adöm," Edom; and probably read *yidrechoo*, "they shall seek," instead of *yireshoo*, "they shall possess," the Hebrew letters easily lending themselves to such a mistake, but the spiritual meaning is exactly the same. The tabernacle of David, *i. e.*, the Messiah, shall possess the remnant of Edom (and if of Edom, then of those most opposed to God and His people), and all the Gentiles upon whom God's name is called. But how shall the tabernacle of David gain possession, and for what purpose? Evidently that the residue of men might seek after the Lord. When men truly sought the Lord, as these primitive Gentile Christians were then doing, then the Spiritual David possessed them—the sign that He in very deed possessed them was that they sought Him.

St. James quoted the words as they were familiar to his hearers, not correcting those which did not impair the meaning. By so doing he shows us incidentally that mere imperfection of translation does not empty the fulness of God's word. The words, "shall

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<sup>1</sup> Sanhedr. f. 96, 2; Schoettgen de Mess., p. 16.

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

19 Wherefore "my sentence is, that we trouble" See ver. 28. not them, which from among the Gentiles "are" \* 1 Thess. i. 9. turned to God:

17 (latter part), 18. There are considerable differences of reading in this passage. The authorized is supported by E., H., L., P., and most Cursives. The Revisers read, "saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the foundation of the world;" and in their margin they read, "who doeth these things which were known from the beginning of the world."

seek the Lord," although not representing anything expressed here in the original, occur in the corresponding prophecy of Isaiah as to the root of Jesse. "In that day there shall be a root (*i. e.*, a sucker from the root) of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek."

"It may be that St. James purposely uses the plural, 'the words of the prophets,' in order to include together with the prophet Amos, other prophets who had foretold the same thing. The statement that the Jewish Church should inherit the Gentiles, that the name of God should be called upon the Gentiles, and that the Gentiles should seek the Lord, are parts of one whole; that they should be called, that they should obey the call, and obeying, be enrolled in the one family of God." (Pusey.)

18. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." If this be a truth, and unquestionably it is, the call of the Gentiles, and the miracles by which that call was attested, were known unto God, and were "the mystery hid from ages and generations," but now "revealed unto his holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit." (Ephes. iii. 5.) In admitting the Gentiles to all Gospel privileges they were but falling in with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

19. "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them," &c. In a large assembly someone must sum up and pronounce the sentence: and this St. James does, as the president of the Church of Jerusalem. He does not give it as his individual opinion overriding that of the rest, but as the opinion of Peter and Paul and John and himself, and concurred in by the elders, who "came to consider of the matter."

20. "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollu-

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain <sup>γ</sup> from pollutions of idols, and <sup>δ</sup> from fornication, and <sup>ε</sup> from things strangled, <sup>ζ</sup> and from blood.

<sup>γ</sup> Gen. xxxv.  
<sup>δ</sup> Exod. xx.  
<sup>ε</sup> 23. Ezek.  
<sup>ζ</sup> 30. 1 Cor.  
 viii. 1. & x.  
 20, 28. Rev.  
 ii. 14, 20.

<sup>ε</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 9,  
 18. Gal. v. 19.  
 Ephes. v. 3.  
 Col. iii. 5.  
 1 Thess. iv. 3.  
 1 Pet. iv. 3.  
<sup>ζ</sup> Gen. ix. 4.  
 Lev. iii. 17.  
 Deut. xii. 16, 23.

20. "From things strangled." Omitted by D. and by Irenæus and other Latin fathers; but retained by all other authorities.

tions of idols," &c. Why are these four restrictions or reservations selected? It is said that two of them, the two last, "from things strangled, and from blood," belonged to the Noachic covenant, an older one than that of Moses, as the words of God to Noah were, "flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, ye shall not eat" (Gen. ix. 4). To abstain from fornication came under the seventh commandment of the moral law, and the general opinion of the heathen that it was no sin, and the shameless practice of it in the temples of Venus or Aphrodite, seemed to require a special notice of it. The first in order, the pollution of idols, is explained in the decree itself as "things offered to idols," and to understand it, we are to remember, that of the animals fit for food which were sacrificed to idols, but a very small part was consumed by fire; the rest was feasted on at the time, but oftener it was sold as somewhat more sacred than ordinary meat, and so they who partook of it were supposed to join in the sacrifice, and so to have fellowship with the god to whom the sacrifice was offered. Thus St. Paul in 1 Corinth. x. 20: "But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils [or rather to demons] and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of demons."

It seems to me that one great object of these prohibitions was to remove the prejudice which the Jews had in eating in common with the converted Gentiles. It was not enough that the Gentiles should believe in Christ. If their brethren of the seed of Israel were to join in their meals, there must be no fear of being polluted by meats offered at the sacrifices of false gods, and nothing from which the blood had not been suffered to run out. With respect to the prohibition of fornication, however, it seems more difficult

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, <sup>b</sup>being read in the synagogues every sabbath <sup>b</sup>ch. xiii. 15. day. <sub>27.</sub>

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch

to understand why it should be joined with these three other pollutions.

21. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read," &c. This seems to mean, "We send this letter and decree to the Gentiles only; as the Jewish Christians do not require it, inasmuch as in their synagogues they hear every sabbath the words of Moses, amongst which is the account of God's covenant with Noah, and the confirmation of that covenant in Levit. xvii. 12, 'Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood.'" In the words of the Pentateuch also they would find ample warning against unlawful intercourse between the sexes, in some cases punishable with death, as in Deut. xxii. 20, 21. And I need hardly cite places from the Pentateuch in which the people are warned against every approach to pollution of idols. They were not even to mention the names of the heathen deities. "Be circumspect, and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." (Exod. xxiii. 13.)

The reader will not fail to observe how the mere reading of the Law is called preaching; so that by God's grace every time we read the Gospels in church we preach Christ. Our people should be reminded of this. Be the preaching in the pulpit ever so poor and defective, those who have ears to hear will recognize in the words of the Evangelists the message of the Gospel of Christ.

22. "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church," &c. Notice how here the position of the ministry as, in some measure, above and apart from the Church is recognized. The apostles and elders *with* the whole Church. The Church, *i. e.*, the body of believers, is concurrent, as is right and seemly, but under the Apostles—the Apostles being the special organs of the Spirit. If it be possible to suppose that the body of the Church held opinions different from those of the Apostles, the especial representatives of Christ, it is clear that their opinions would have no validity.

with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed °Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

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

23. "The apostles and elders and brethren." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Copt., some Arm.; but N, A., B., C., D., Vulg., read, "the apostles and elder brethren," omitting "and the" (*kai oi*.) See below.

"To send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas," &c. This was, in all probability, done at the suggestion of Paul. He felt that he was distrusted by the Pharisaical converts, and desired to have one or two of the leading Christians of the Jerusalem church to confirm the decree which he carried with him.

The two sent were Judas and Silas, or Silvanus. Of Judas nothing more is said, except that along with Silas he was a prophet (verse 32). Some conjecture that he was the brother of the Joses surnamed Barsabas, of Acts i. 23. Nothing more is known of him either from Scripture or from tradition, whereas we shall find frequent mention of Silas in the remainder of this book.

23. "And they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles and elders," &c. The letter is sent from the Apostles and elders with whom the brethren concurred, not apparently to the churches, but to the Gentiles in the particular churches who had been converted to the faith.

There is a difference of reading in the principal uncials N, B., C., D., and the Vulgate, which has an important bearing on early ecclesiastical authority.

I cannot give this bearing better than in the words of Bishop Wordsworth:—

"The *kai* (and) is not in D., and the words *kai oi* (and the) are not found in N, A., B., C., nor in the Vulgate and Armenian versions, nor in Irenæus, iii. 14, nor Origen, c. Celsus, p. 396 (see Wetstein and Mill, Prolegomena, 1350). They have, therefore, not been admitted by Lachman, Borneman, and Alford [and to these we may add Tischendorf, and Westcott and Hort]. And this reading, which omits *kai oi*, seems to be confirmed by internal evidence.

"1. *A priori*, Paul and Barnabas are said to go up to the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem (xv. 2) concerning this question.

brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia :

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"2. The Apostles and elders are said to have met together to consider this matter (xv. 6).

"3. *A posteriori*, Paul is said to have gone through the cities delivering to them to keep the decrees determined by 'the apostles and elders at Jerusalem' (xvi. 4). This triple mention of Apostles and elders, without the addition of any other party, is significant. It seems to indicate that the Apostles and elders constituted the council as far as deliberation, voice, and definitive sentence were concerned ; and therefore the sentence was promulgated in their names."<sup>1</sup>

I may, I hope without presumption, be permitted to express my opinion that the lay Jews of Jerusalem attending the council were most probably influenced very much indeed in giving their concurrence through the decided words spoken by St. Peter and St. James. Such seems to have been the influence of the Pharisaic Jewish Christians (see Acts xxi. 20-26) that if these two had not interposed with such weighty words, it is in the highest degree probable that there would have been a serious division, or perhaps the decision would have gone the other way.

"Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." The Cilician churches were the first-fruits of St. Paul's ministry, and doubtless he had impressed upon them their Christian liberty. They were, no doubt, included because of their numbers, and it may be also that the churches lately planted in the provinces just beyond them, viz. Lycaonia and Pisidia, were reckoned under them.

Now that we have finished the account of this assembly, it may be well to remind the reader that it is most absurd to call it, as some have done, the first great General Council. It was in no respect a general council, but simply a meeting of a local church, the church of Jerusalem, to consider and pronounce upon a matter

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Wordsworth also adds the following: "This interpretation is confirmed by the subsequent usage of the Christian Church in Synods. See Bingham (ii. 19, 11-13). It is agreed on all hands by unprejudiced persons that Presbyters had liberty to sit and deliberate with Bishops in Provincial Councils." And as Archbishop Cranmer says (in Bishop Burnet's "History of the Reformation," c. i., p. 353), "In all the ancient Councils of the Church in matters of faith and interpretation of Scripture, no man made definite subscription but Bishops and Priests, forso much as the declaration of the Word of God appertains unto them," &c.

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that <sup>d</sup> certain which went  
d ver. 1. Gal. ii. 4. & v. 12. Tit. i. 10, 11. out from us have troubled you with words, sub-  
 verting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circum-  
 cised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* com-  
 mandment:

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one  
 accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barna-  
 bas and Paul,

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24. "Saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law," omitted by N, A., B., D., 13, 61, Vulg., Sah., Copt., &c.; but retained by C., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Arm., Æth.

which it alone could determine, with any chance of the determina-  
 tion being final. The church of Jerusalem was unique among  
 churches, in that it had so long the presence and guidance of the  
 Apostolic company, and, in addition to this, all its feelings  
 (humanly speaking) must have been in favour of imposing as much  
 of the ceremonial law as possible upon the Gentiles. When such  
 a church, thus led by Peter and James, pronounced such a decree,  
 there seems to be no room for doubt or opposition. A more general  
 council to which deputies from Gentile churches were admitted,  
 would have had nothing like the effect of the unfettered decision  
 of such a church. Every Gentile deputy would have been looked  
 upon by the Judaizers as a source of weakness and error rather  
 than of strength and certainty. The Judaizers must be put down  
 if the Church of Christ was to be Catholic, and only one Church, the  
 one founded at Pentecost, the Church of the Apostles, the one ruled  
 over by so holy and influential an Israelite as James, could do this.

24. "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out  
 from us," &c. These words are very strong. They not only imply  
 that the Judaizers in question spoke falsely when they represented  
 themselves as coming from James, in the sense of being authorita-  
 tively sent by him, but that their teaching was no matter of indiffe-  
 rence—on the contrary, it unsettled souls by undermining their  
 confidence in Christ. St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians says  
 nothing stronger than this.

25. "It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord,  
 to send," &c. These "chosen men" were the real representatives  
 of the council, inasmuch as it was the teaching of Paul and Bar-



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

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

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

29 'That ye abstain from meats offered to

° ch. xiii. 50.  
& xiv. 19.  
1 Cor. xv. 30.  
2 Cor. xi. 23,  
26.  
+ Gr. word.

† ver. 20. ch.  
xxi. 25. Rev.  
ii. 14, 20.

nabas which was called in question. Paul and Barnabas then returned, and these two men went with them from the Apostles and elders to confirm the fact that the heads of the Church of Jerusalem fully approved of the teaching of their brother Apostles among the Gentiles.

26. "Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Not only, that is, had God given to them power to work miracles, and had blessed their preaching to the conversion of many souls, but they are already martyrs in will and intention, for they have, as at Lystra, hazarded their lives for the faith. The meaning of the original is stronger, "men who have delivered up their lives." St. Paul lay as one dead for some time (Acts xiv. 19).

27. "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas . . . by mouth." Their word and presence will confirm the truth of the letter.

28. "For it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us." This association of a Person in the Trinity, with mere weak, fallible men, such as the Apostles, may seem strange, but it is only in accordance with much of the teaching of this book, as, for instance, when Ananias and Sapphira attempted to deceive the Apostles, they "lied unto the Holy Ghost." The Apostles were conscious that they spake not of themselves, but that the Spirit of their Father spake in them. And if ever the Spirit of God would guide them, it would be at a solemn occasion like this. F. M. in his notes interprets it somewhat differently: "The descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his family, and the fact that Paul and Barnabas set apart by the Holy Ghost had not required it (circumcision), evince the Divine pleasure, and we determine accordingly in obedience to His guidance."

29. "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from

8 Lev. xvii. 14. idols, and 9 from blood, and from things strangled,

blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." These are called by the Apostle "necessary things," and if the same condition of things existed now as in the Church of the first age. their obligation would be now as stringent as ever. If, for instance, we now lived in a state of things in which Heathenism and Christianity existed side by side, the Christians would be bound, from loyalty to their Lord, rigidly to abstain from taking any part in feasts held avowedly in honour of false gods.<sup>1</sup>

Again, of course, the prohibition of fornication, though here no doubt included because of its forming part of the worship of certain deities, is good for all time. But how is it with the prohibition of things strangled, and blood? Are these of as perpetual obligation as the other two? Here we have to remark that the practice of the Catholic Church has not been uniform. At first, indeed for some centuries, blood as food was rigidly abstained from. Thus, in a passage from Tertullian, often quoted, we read: "Christians have not even the blood of animals at their meals of simple and natural food, and they abstain from things strangled, or that die a natural death, for no other reason than that they may not contract pollution so much as from blood secreted in the viscera. To clench the matter with a single example: you tempt Christians with sausages of blood, just because you are perfectly aware that the thing by which you thus try to get them to transgress is unlawful." But even in the Church of Africa, to which at first Tertullian belonged, the prohibition of things strangled had become obsolete in the time of Augustine, A.D. 400, for he writes that, "The Church having become so entirely Gentile that none who are outwardly Israelites are to be found in it, no Christian feels bound to abstain from thrushes or small birds because their blood has not been poured out; or from hares, because they are killed by a stroke on the neck, without shedding their blood. Any who are still afraid to touch these things are laughed at by the rest, so general is the conviction of the truth that 'not what entereth into the mouth defileth you, but what

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<sup>1</sup> I understand that in Hindostan it is no uncommon thing when some Rajah or other great man gives an entertainment on the day of some god, as Vishnu, which feast has been held from time immemorial to his honour, to find numbers of professedly Christian residents and officials in attendance, not, of course, as worshippers, but as lookers-on and sharers in the banquet.

and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

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

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

|| Or, *exhortation.*

cometh out of it," &c. Augustine against Faustus, xxxii. 13, quoted in Blunt, who very pertinently remarks: "Although St. Augustine thus speaks of the precept as one which was only in some degree of temporary obligation, it is very observable that he does not deny its perpetual obligation as far as regards any deliberate use of blood as an article of food. His words show that Christians of his time did not shrink from eating small wild birds, and quadrupeds killed by methods of chase similar in character to those by which game is now killed; but he gives no reason whatever to suppose that he or they would have drawn the blood from an ox or sheep (or hog), and made it into food." With this I entirely concur. There seems something revolting in the deliberate use of blood for food.<sup>1</sup>

"From which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." "Ye do well to keep yourselves"—ye act by so doing in a godly and Christian way, and are likely to prosper in your Christian walk.

30, 31. "So when they were dismissed . . . they rejoiced for the consolation." The letter was not handed from one to another, but read in a solemn assembly of the Church, as if it was an inspired document, the work of the Spirit of God acting through the heads of the Church. And so it was.

"They rejoiced for the consolation." They rejoiced that they, and those who after them should be added to the Church, should be delivered from what was in their case a useless and unmeaning bondage.

32. "And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves . . .

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<sup>1</sup> The Greeks continue, we are told, to observe the precept to this day; not so the churches of the Roman obedience in the West, if we are to judge from the words of so authoritative a commentator as Cornelius à Lapide, who concludes his remarks with the words, "Verum nunc a multis centenis annis lex ista ubique gentium (exceptis Græciis) usu contrario abolita est. Unde nunc sanguinem in ferculis quæ sunt ex intestinis porcorum et boum sanguine infatis comedimus."

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves,  
a ch. xiv. 22.  
 & xviii. 23. <sup>b</sup> exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.

33 And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let <sup>1</sup> go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.  
1 Cor. xvi. 11.  
 Heb. xi. 31.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

35 <sup>k</sup> Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.  
k ch. xiii. 1.

36 ¶ And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren <sup>1</sup> in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.  
1 ch. xiii. 4, 13,  
 14, 51. & xiv.  
 1, 6, 24, 25.

33. "Unto the apostles." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, some Copt., Arm.; but "to those that sent them," read by N, A., B., C., D., about fifteen Cursives, Vulg., Sah., some Copt., &c.

34. N, A., B., E., H., L., P., about sixty Cursives, Vulg. (Amiat.), and some editions of versions, omit this verse.

confirmed them." Prophets, *i.e.*, inspired teachers. We are to remember that there was not in each Christian's hands a copy of the New Testament as there is now, so that the prophets were necessary, if there was to be any exhortation worth speaking of, or instruction beyond the merest outlines or rudiments.

"Confirmed them"—*i.e.*, strengthened them in the faith, which the teaching of the Judaizers had gone far to pervert.

33-35. "And after they had tarried there a space . . . with many others also." They were let go in peace—that is, with a solemn benediction on the part of the Church: "Peace be with you." "Go in peace."

"Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still." Whether this verse be genuine or not, it records a fact that Silas either stayed behind or returned very shortly. He was probably brought under the spell of St. Paul's zeal, and determined to be with him.

36. "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again, and visit," &c. To see, that is, whether they stood fast in the

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them <sup>m</sup> John, whose surname was Mark.

<sup>m</sup> ch. xii. 12,  
25. & xiii. 5.  
Col. iv. 10.  
2 Tim. iv. 11.  
Philem. 24.  
<sup>n</sup> ch. xiii. 13.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, <sup>n</sup> who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

Gospel. It would be well if some of our so-called revival preachers were to visit the places where they have preached, and excited many, and see "how they do." They would find that the vast majority of their converts fall away, and might thus be led to distrust some of the modes which they employ.

37. "And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname," &c. Rather "willed," "was desirous"—so Revisers, reading *ἠβούλετο*, not *ἠβούλευσατο*.

38. "But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed," &c. The expression "went not with them to the work" implies a plain dereliction of duty on the part of Mark, whether from shrinking from the dangers and hardships of the Apostolic life, or from some cause connected with the fact that he now found that St. Paul took the lead, whereas he (Mark) had commenced the journey more as the companion of Barnabas than of Paul, we know not. Evidently, however, he was in the wrong. And Barnabas was in the wrong in upholding his claim contrary to the judgment of the superior Apostle. The circumstances of St. Paul's calling, and his designation to the Apostolate of the Gentiles, were such that St. Barnabas, no matter what his private feelings respecting his relative, ought to have given way. It must have cost Paul far more in going counter to the warmly expressed feelings of him who, when he was looked askance upon by all, had taken him by the hand, than it would have cost Barnabas to have given up his private feelings. But St. Paul was infinitely the greater man of the two. Assuming him to have been right in his judgment respecting Mark's conduct, nothing appears to me to vindicate the wisdom of God in choosing Paul for so exalted a place in the Church more than this episode. Of him it could be said, "Who said to his father and to his mother, I have not seen him. Neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children" (Deut. xxxiii. 9). And the sequel showed abundantly that he was right. Mark required discipline; and to one right-minded the severest of all discipline

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

° ch. xiv. 26. 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, ° being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

40. "Grace of God." So C., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Copt., Syriac, Arm.; but N, A., B., D., 13, 33, 34, 40, 61, 68, Vulg. (Cod. Amiat.), read, "the Lord"—"grace of the Lord."

must have been that for want of zeal his companionship in the work of Christ was rejected by the foremost man in the Church, and one more than all other men honoured by God in his work. But the discipline was, indeed, blessed to the erring one. Though he was now under a cloud, the later notices of him are of the brightest sunshine. This very Apostle in his latest Epistle sends for him as "one profitable to him for the ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 11); and he was also the companion of St. Peter, and received from his lips the Gospel which bears his name.

39. "And the contention was so sharp between them," &c. It is doubtful whether the original expresses so angry a dispute and estrangement as our translation does. The word occurs only once elsewhere in the New Testament, in Heb. x. 24: "Let us . . . works;" which might be literally rendered, "Let us consider one another with a view to provocation to love and to good works." The Vulgate is simply: "Facta est autem dissensio ita ut discederunt ab invicem." The Syriac: "On account of this contention they separated one from the other." No doubt there was, as we term it, strong feeling expressed; but on one side it may have been necessary, if Mark had as yet not expressed repentance for his defection.

"And so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus."

40, 41. "And Paul chose Silas . . . confirming the churches." No doubt this division was agreed upon, and they parted without any breach of friendship; but the significant words which are added, "being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God," seem to imply that the Church of Antioch judged that, in the sight of God, St. Paul was in the right.



41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, <sup>p</sup> confirming the churches. p ch. xvi. 5.

“Confirming,” *i.e.*, strengthening, very probably (taking into account the teaching of Rom. i. 11, compared with Acts xix. 6), not only by word of mouth, but by laying on of hands.

### CHAP. XVI.

**T**HEN came he to <sup>a</sup>Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, <sup>b</sup>named Timotheus, <sup>c</sup>the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:

2 Which <sup>d</sup>was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

<sup>a</sup> ch. xiv. 8.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. xix. 22.  
 Rom. xvi. 21.  
 1 Cor. iv. 17.  
 Phil. ii. 19.  
 1 Thess. iii. 2.  
 1 Tim. i. 2.  
 2 Tim. i. 2.  
 2 Tim. i. 5.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. vi. 3.

1. “Then came he to Derbe and Lystra.” Cities of Lycaonia, which adjoined Cilicia.

“And behold a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus . . . his father *was* a Greek.” The decree of the Apostles, which fully exempted from circumcision the believing Gentiles, did not so exempt the believing Jews. Till the Law, and indeed the whole Jewish polity, was abolished by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the rite of circumcision, and the keeping of the Law consequent upon it, was universally understood to be incumbent upon all Jews. All the Jews of Jerusalem and Judæa when converted abated not one tittle of their obedience to the Law: on the contrary, they were zealous for it. St. Paul himself acquiesced in the assertion that he “walked orderly and kept the law” (xxi. 20-26). Now Timotheus, being the son of a Jewish mother, was entitled to all the privileges, national and religious, of the children of Israel. St. Paul then saw that it would be reckoned a great scandal among his countrymen if he took about with him, as his fellow-helper, one who through his mother inherited the national promises, and so had a right to circumcision, and was yet uncircumcised; and so,



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

<sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 20.  
Gal. ii. 3. See  
Gal. v. 2.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, <sup>f</sup> that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

<sup>f</sup> ch. xv. 28,  
29.

5 And <sup>g</sup> so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

<sup>g</sup> ch. xv. 41.

because of the Jews, *i.e.* to give no needless offence to them, he circumcised Timothy.

“For they knew all that his father was a Greek.” This seems to mean that they would account him uncircumcised, and so take umbrage at his assisting St. Paul, unless the Apostle had caused him to be circumcised, and made the fact known.

Respecting St. Timothy, we learn that from a child he had known the Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 15), that he was a man of unfeigned faith (2 Tim. i. 5), that he had been converted by St. Paul himself, as he called him his own son in the faith (1 Tim. i. 2), that he had some spiritual gift through the laying on of the Apostles' hands (2 Tim. i. 6); and the warmth of personal affection towards him which runs through the two letters written to him, clearly shows him to have been full of natural affection which had been transformed and sanctified into Christian love.

4, 5. “And as they went through the cities . . . were at Jerusalem . . . number daily.” I cannot help thinking that these decrees were considerably more than the four prohibitions, and consisted of regulations respecting the planting, and ordering, and discipline of the churches which Paul and the other Apostles had agreed upon as a guide to the churches everywhere.

The deliverance from the Jewish yoke of bondage would allow freer scope to the Gospel, and so would establish the Gentiles in the faith, as it would remove a system which interposed between them and Christ; and being now freed from the fear of having to submit to such an intolerable burden, they could the more readily join the Church.

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

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

8 And they passing by Mysia <sup>b</sup> came down to Troas. <sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 12.  
2 Tim. iv. 13.

6. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden." Revisers read, "And they went throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden," &c., following N, A., B., C., D.; but reading of Authorized supported by E., H., L., P., and most Cursives.

7. "But the Spirit." So H., L., P., the greater part of Cursives, Sah., Arm.; but N, A., B., some Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Copt., add, "of Jesus"—"the Spirit of Jesus."

6. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia," &c. Phrygia is a large inland province which contains the cities of Laodicea, Colosse, and Hierapolis (Coloss. iv. 13, 16). Galatia takes its name from an irruption of Gauls who invaded Greece and Asia Minor three centuries before the Christian era. It became a Roman province A.D. 26. Its principal cities, Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus, are not mentioned in either the Acts or Epistles, St. Paul addressing his Epistle to the churches of Galatia.

"Were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." It was the will of the Divine Spirit that the Gospel should be preached in Europe in the cities of Philippi, Berea, Athens, and Corinth, before it was carried by St. Paul to the very important city of Ephesus, the capital of Asia Minor. They were forbidden to go there because it was the will of the Spirit that the Gospel should be proclaimed in certain districts first, and in others at a later period.

7. "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia," &c. Mysia, a province at the extreme north-west corner of what we call Asia Minor.

"They assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." Many of the oldest MSS. read "The Spirit of Jesus"—the Holy Spirit being the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father, and so proceeding from the Son as well as from the Father.

8, 9. "And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas . . . Come over into Macedonia, and help us." They had had two direct intimations from the Spirit, one forbidding them to preach in the coun-

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There  
1 ch. x. 30. stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him,  
 saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we  
2 Cor. ii. 13. endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly  
 gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the  
 Gospel unto them.

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

1 Phil. i. 1. 12 And from thence to Philippi, which is

10. "The Lord had called us." So D., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Sah., Arm.; but N., A., B., C., E., some Cursives, Vulg., Copt., read, "God had called us."

tries to the north of their route, another in those to the south, and so obeying these guidances and journeying westward they came to Troas, from whence they could descry the shores of Europe; and now the reason for these interpositions was manifested. They were summoned by a vision to cross over the narrow strip of sea to Macedonia.

Troas was five miles from the site of ancient Troy. It had been built in honour of Alexander the Great, and called after him Alexandria Troas. There was at one time some chance of its being made New Rome, the capital of the world-wide empire, but Constantine finally fixed on Byzantium.

10. "And after he had seen the vision . . . Gospel unto them." The reader will notice the remarkable change in the person from the third person singular, "after *he* had seen the vision," to the first person plural, "immediately *we* endeavoured to go into Macedonia." There is but one way worth notice of accounting for this, viz., that Luke, the writer of this book, had joined them in Troas. The first person plural is used to the 17th verse; after this it is dropped, and the third person singular resumed to the 5th verse of the 20th chapter, when St. Luke was apparently again in the company of St. Paul and his friends.

11. "Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course," &c. Samothracia, an island which yet retains its name, Samothraki.

"Neapolis." The seaport of Philippi, a few miles from it.

12. "And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that

|| the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. | Or, the first.

13 And on the † sabbath we went out of the + Gr. sabbath day.  
city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

12. "The chief city of that part of Macedonia." See below.

13. "Out of the city." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, &c.; but N, A., B., C., D., a few Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, read, "gate"—"out of the gate."

"Where prayer was wont (or "supposed") to be made." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives; but N, A., B., C., Copt., &c., "where we thought that prayer was made."

part . . . certain days." Much difficulty has been made here because Philippi was not one of the capitals of Macedonia, but St. Luke does not really say that it was. He, according to our translation, calls it "the chief city of that part of Macedonia." The Revisers translate it, "which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district."

"A colony," *i. e.*, a Roman colony. "The Roman colonies were primarily intended as military safeguards of the frontiers, and as checks upon insurgent provincials. They served as convenient possessions for rewarding veterans who had served in the wars, and for establishing freedmen and other Italians whom it was desirable to remove to a distance. The colonists went out with all the pride of Roman citizens to represent and reproduce the city in the midst of an alien population. They proceeded to their destination like an army with its standards, and the limits of the new city were marked out by the plough. Their names were still enrolled in one of the Roman tribes. Every traveller who passed through a colonia saw there the insignia of Rome. He heard the Latin language, and was amenable in the strictest sense to the Roman law. The coinage of the city, even if it were in a Greek province, had Latin inscriptions," &c. (From Conybeare and Howson's "St. Paul.")

13. "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer," &c. Literally, by a river side where it was supposed that there was a proseuche, or place of prayer. Josephus gives a decree of the people of Halicarnassus, in which it is ordered that the Jews shall be permitted to observe their law and to make their places of prayer, or proseuchæ, at the seaside, according to the customs of their forefathers.

14 ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*; <sup>m</sup> Luke xxiv. whose <sup>m</sup> heart the Lord opened, that she attended <sup>45.</sup> unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful

We should gather from the passage that there was no synagogue, and that the Apostle, in obedience to the rule of proclaiming the Gospel "to the Jew first," sought out this place, where it was most probable that they would find some Jews who might be sojourning in the city. They only found a few women, but amongst them one of a far higher stamp, who received their word, and through God's grace was baptized into the Church. This was Lydia, a sojourner there, whose home was Thyatira. The expression "who worshipped God," seems to imply that she was a proselyte. A seller of purple is, of course, a seller of fabrics dyed purple or crimson, not of the dye itself. From the price of the dye it was probably a very lucrative trade. Lewin remarks, Thyatira was a city of Lydia, and the Lydian women had from the time of Homer downwards, been famous for their purple dyes (*Iliad*, iv. 141). Sir George Wheeler found among the ruins of Thyatira, an inscription, *Οι Βαφεῖς, the dyers.*

"Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things," &c. The reader will remember how this took place in the persons of the Apostles themselves. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Here, however, it was the heart that the Lord opened. None can be turned to God without His special grace, and yet there is a preparation on man's part required to prepare the way. Here was a devout worshipper of God, and a frequenter of the place of prayer, and whilst others attended, it may be, formally, she prayed with sincerity, and God rewarded her according to His promise: "To him that ordereth his conversation right, will I show the salvation of God."

15. "And when she was baptized, and her household." This place is often cited as being in favour of the baptism of infants. If it was the only place in which it is said that households were baptized, it might not have much weight in favour of the practice; but

to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And  
<sup>a</sup> she constrained us.

16 ¶ And it came to pass, as we went to prayer,  
 a certain damsel <sup>o</sup> possessed with a spirit ¶ of  
 divination met us, which brought her masters  
<sup>p</sup> much gain by soothsaying :

<sup>a</sup> Gen. xix. 3.  
 & xxviii. 11.  
 Judg. xix. 21.  
 Luke xxiv. 29.  
 Heb. xiii. 2.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 Sam. xxviii.  
 7.  
 ¶ Or, of *Py-*  
*thon*.  
<sup>p</sup> ch. xix. 24.

16. "As we went to prayer." Rather, "the place of prayer"—the *proseuche*.

inasmuch as it is one of three places in which the same is said respecting the households of those who accepted the Gospel, it becomes of considerable value in ascertaining the practice of the ancient Church. It is sometimes alleged by unthinking persons that we have no evidence that there were infants in these households. On the contrary, the great probability is that they were mainly composed of infants, or, at least, of young persons who had not come to years of discretion, and so would follow, almost as a matter of course, the opinion of the head of the household. If it were not so, we have to face the enormous difficulty of a number of persons of mature age, mostly slaves, suddenly becoming convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and being allowed to be baptized, when it is quite clear that the greater part of them would submit to the rite to please the head of the household, for it is exceedingly improbable that slaves would examine for themselves into the truth of Christianity. The baptism of children, of course, would naturally take the place of circumcision. If infants were brought under the old covenant that they might be brought up under its obligations, much more would they be entered under the new at the earliest age.

"And she constrained us." The Apostolic party consisted of four—Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke. They probably lodged and fared very meanly, and yet were somewhat unwilling to receive anything from their converts, lest it should be said that they preached for the sake of gain.

16. "And it came to pass . . . much gain by soothsaying." A spirit of divination, or Python. Python was the prophetic serpent at Delphi. The Python or serpent gave his name and place to the prophetic deity of the Gentile world; the successor of the serpent at Delphi was the Pythian Phœbus or Apollo. And from him all who claimed the powers of divination were called Pythons, hence

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, <sup>q</sup>being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in

<sup>q</sup> See Mark i. 25, 34.

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17. "Shew unto us." So A., C<sup>2</sup>, H., L., P., many Cursives, Sah., Copt.; but N, B., D., E., and most Cursives, read, "unto you."

the name given to this damsel of Pythoness, described her as somewhat different from the majority of those who were possessed by evil spirits. They exhibited signs of possession by ravings and gesticulation, she by a spirit dwelling in her which pretended to be oracular and uttered prophecies. These were turned to account by her masters, and it seems that more than one person had a share in the gains which accrued from these prophetic utterances. Her case seems to have been a strange mixture of reality and imposture. There is no doubt that she was possessed by an evil spirit, for St. Paul by his word exorcised the spirit, and restored her to soundness of mind; and yet it is quite certain that such a spirit knew not the future, and would compel her to lie or to deceive.

17. "The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants," &c. The similarity between the act of this evil spirit and those mentioned in the Gospels is very remarkable; When in the presence of the Saviour, the latter compelled their victims to run forward and fall at His feet, and confess Him to be the Son of the Most High God (Luke viii. 28), and now this one, feeling the same manifest presence of Jesus, though in His servants, acts in much the same way: "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." I believe, as I have elsewhere shown, that they were compelled to render to the King of the unseen and supernatural world this enforced acknowledgment. It is just possible that they might think that they could better their condition by it. But the Lord would never receive their acknowledgment. It must be the good alone both amongst angels and men who can be allowed to witness to Him, and so He rebuked them and enjoined silence or cast them out, as it was with this girl inhabited by the prophetic spirit.

18. "And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus

the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. 'And he came out the same hour.

r Mark xvi. 17.

19 ¶ And 'when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, 'they caught Paul and Silas, and "drew *them* into the || marketplace unto the rulers,

\* ch. xix. 25, 26.

† 2 Cor. vi. 5.

‡ Matt. x. 18.

§ Or, court.

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, \*do exceedingly trouble our city,

\* 1 Kings

xviii. 17.

ch. xvii. 6.

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

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Christ to come out of her." The question has been put, "How was it that the Apostle permitted this 'for many days?' Why did not he at once cast the spirit out?" Various reasons have been given; one is, that as this is the first instance in the history of St. Paul of the appearance of a demoniac, he probably did not as yet know his power till he thus exercised it. Another, that there must be some sort of moral change in the person possessed before the tormentor could be cast out, and St. Paul waited for this. But may it not be this? The Apostles had in most cases, if not in all, a secret intimation respecting those upon whom they were to exercise Divine power, and this intimation was not given till after many days. God gives the power, but reserves to Himself the choice of the objects of it.

19. "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains, . . . exceedingly trouble our city." "Drew them into the marketplace," rather the Agora or Forum.

"Unto the rulers." This is the generic name signifying all who bear rule, but in the next verse the word which he uses for magistrates is a military word, *strategoi*, or generals. This is in exact accordance with the fact that Philippi, being a colonia, would have magistrates of military rank. Most expositors consider them to be the *duumviri*, the consuls of the miniature republic.

"These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city."

21. "And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive," &c. The Jews were then very unpopular. It was about this time that Claudius sent forth the edict banishing all Jews from Rome.



22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and  
 7 2 Cor. vi. 5. the magistrates rent off their clothes,<sup>7</sup> and com-  
 8 xi. 23, 25.  
 1 Thess. ii. 2. manded to beat *them*.

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The accusation is vague, the customs which the Christians teach are not specified; but both Jews and Christians were at one in this, that all whom they converted should renounce the worship of all false gods, and all customs of idolatrous worship. Howson mentions a very severe law, if not now in force, yet enacted shortly after this, forbidding any one not a born Jew to receive circumcision. Any citizen of Rome who was circumcised, was liable to perpetual exile and the confiscation of his goods. A master who allowed his slave to be circumcised exposed himself to a like penalty. The surgeon who circumcised was to be put to death, &c. Country magistrates such as these could not well be made to understand the difference between Jews and Christians. They could only look upon the followers of Christ as a Jewish sect. In this case also Paul would be held to be a Jew, because his preaching had as yet been confined to the precincts of the Jewish roadside oratory.

22, 23. "And the multitude . . . charging the jailor to keep them safely." No inquiries were made, no forms of justice were gone through. All was done through passion and intolerance, and all must have taken place because they were said to be Jews.

"The magistrates rent off their clothes"—*i.e.*, those of the prisoners.

"And commanded to beat them"—*i.e.*, with the rods of the lictors. This was done very probably with the view of pacifying the mob. The next day, as seen from the sequel, they intended to dismiss them. The beating with rods was a very severe punishment, though not to be compared to the scourging which the Lord underwent.

The question has been asked, why did not Paul plead his Roman citizenship, so that he might have been exempted from this infliction? To this it has been answered that in all probability he did not desire to escape alone, and leave those with him to their fate; but rather allowed the magistrates to put themselves in the wrong that afterwards he might plead with more power for his companions. It has also been supposed that the clamour and violence of the

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

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

25 ¶ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

whole scene was such that his defence could not be heard. The multitude for some reason were infuriated, and would have torn them to pieces had not the magistrates at once proceeded to inflict severe punishment.

This was one of the three instances of being "beaten with rods," alluded to by the Apostle in 2 Corinth. xi. 25. Of the circumstances attending the other two we are altogether ignorant.

23, 24. "And when they had laid many stripes . . . fast in the stocks." "The inner prison"—probably a cold, damp cavern, reeking with filth and every abomination.

"And made their feet fast in the stocks." The *ξύλον*, or "nervus," resembled our stocks, and was a wooden frame, in which the feet, and sometimes the head and hands also, were held fast in narrow holes, from which they could not be drawn out by any struggles of the culprit.

This is to be noticed, for it shows that the jailor was in no way favourable to them, and treated them as he would have treated any other supposed criminals respecting whom he had received such a charge. He seems never to have heard them preach, or, if he had, it had not had the smallest effect upon him in moving him to treat them with humanity.

25. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises," &c. The mention of midnight, rather than the use of such a term as "during the night," seems to imply that they kept this hour of deepest sleep as a time of prayer. This is no more than the Psalmist did when he wrote, "At midnight will I rise to give thanks to thee, because of thy righteous judgment."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Archdeacon Freeman has shown in his "Principles of Divine Service" that the very earliest forms of service (apart from the Eucharistic) were nightly, or for the night. Part I., ch. i., secs. 1-4.

26 \* And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that  
r ch. iv. 31. the foundations of the prison were shaken: and  
a ch. v. 19. immediately \* all the doors were opened, and every  
& xii. 7, 10. one's bands were loosed.

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The literal meaning is "praying, they sang hymns." No doubt the hymns were psalms, as no hymns, except those in St. Luke, and, perhaps, the Gloria in Excelsis, have come down to us from these earliest times. But the daily practice of Psalmody, or the repetition or singing or chanting of Psalms, passed naturally from the synagogue to the Church.

"And the prisoners heard them." Why is this told us? Was it that we might know that these holy men prayed not silently, but so intoned what they offered to God that it resounded through the prison? Perhaps, however, it may have reference to what follows. The prisoners having heard them thus praying connected the earthquake and the sudden and unaccountable loosening of each man from his chains with the prayers of Paul and Silas, and obeyed their call to remain where they were, and not attempt to escape.

26. "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison," &c. It has been debated whether this was a natural earthquake which occurred just at this opportune moment, or whether it was a special act of the irresistible will of Almighty God. It must have been the latter, for, if it was not, there must have been a still more stupendous miracle to preserve the prisoners from being dashed to pieces by a shock which shook the foundations of the prison, and broke the stocks in which the feet of Paul and Silas were fastened, so as to set them free without, apparently, their bodies suffering the smallest injury.

And, again, if it was a natural miracle, arising from the same causes which bring about all other such convulsions of nature, then we are obliged to believe that God timed all His spiritual acts, such as the opening of the heart of Lydia, the expulsion of the evil spirit, and the conversion of the jailor, so as to synchronize exactly with the convulsions of mere unassisted nature left to itself. On such an hypothesis we should be forced to believe that God had parted with all power over the forces of matter, so that they should be left to themselves to work out unconsciously their natural results, and God have to stand by, as it were, and regulate the workings of His conscious will by the involuntary acts of unconscious forces. So

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

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

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

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that He Who sees and hears should be inferior to that which neither sees nor hears; so that the Almighty's omniscience and omnipotence should have to wait upon unconscious brute elemental force, acting blindly and involuntarily as a machine acts. None but Atheists can believe this; and yet is it not the logical outcome of the idea that this earthquake was part of the same sequence of natural causes and effects as all other natural convulsions are?

27, 28. "And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep . . . we are all here." According to the Roman law, if any of the prisoners had escaped, the jailor would have had to suffer the same penalty as the criminal who had escaped had been condemned to suffer. Suicide was then reckoned not to be a crime. Commentators remind us that a great number of the defeated party after the battle of Philippi, in despair of the republic, put an end to their own lives; among these were Brutus and Cassius. "Self-murder among the Romans in the first and second centuries of the Christian era was fearfully common. It was even approved of in Stoic Philosophy. Many of the noblest of the Romans ended their days in this manner" (Howson).

"Do thyself no harm." How could St. Paul know what this jailor was about to do? Did he draw his sword in his presence? Certainly not, for they were immured in the inner prison, in a dark dungeon. But as God revealed to Elisha the iniquity of Gehazi, "Went not my heart with thee?" so now the jailor must be saved from self-destruction, to be to all ages an example of faith in Christ.

29, 30. "Then he called for a light [lights], and sprang in, and came trembling . . . what must I do to be saved?" Trembling, because he felt that the power of the God of heaven and earth had been manifested in the deliverance of those whom he had so remorselessly treated but a short time before.

30 And brought them out, and said, <sup>b</sup>Sirs, what must I

do to be saved?

<sup>b</sup> Luke iii. 10.  
ch. ii. 37. &  
ix. 6.

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“What must I do to be saved?” It has been objected, How could an ignorant heathen ask such a question? To which it may be replied, that he may have not been altogether in heathen ignorance. He may have had instruction in the Old Testament revelation from some of the devout persons who attended the river-side oratory; or he may long have had misgivings respecting the worship of the heathen gods. He must have heard of the circumstances which led to Paul and Silas being put under his charge, viz., that an evil spirit was by the mere word of Paul cast out of a woman, who followed the Apostles with the words: “These are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.” Connecting these words with what followed—with the earthquake, which opened the prison doors, loosened the chains, broke the wooden stocks in pieces, and yet did no injury to any of those in the prison, not one of whom attempted to escape,—he would exclaim, “What must I do to be saved?” What does the living God require of me so that I should be delivered from the burden of my past wrong-doing, and be enabled to serve a Being Who has shown such power and goodness? Anyhow, his question must be understood in the light of the answer which Paul and Silas gave. The salvation which they promised must be one in the spiritual world, or else they could not have called upon him to believe in Jesus that he might be saved.

I cannot help thinking that, putting all the circumstances together, the chief thing in his mind, when he asked, “What shall I do to be saved?” was deliverance from the anger of God. That anger he considered to have been manifested in the earthquake, which he unquestionably connected with the imprisonment of the two servants of God; and it may be with the roughness and severity with which he had treated them. In this way the answer of the Apostles would exactly fit his present very imperfect knowledge of God, and yet be true of the highest further knowledge which God might vouchsafe to him.

31. “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” &c. This statement of the way of salvation is one of the most important in the New Testament. It contains the seed

## 31 And they said, ° Believe on the Lord Jesus

° John iii. 16,  
36. & vi. 47.  
1 John v. 10.

31. "The Lord Jesus Christ." So C., D., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Sab., Arm., Æth.; but N, A., B., 2, 13, 30, 61, 100, Vulg., Copt., omit "Christ"—"Believe on the Lord Jesus."

of the whole body of Apostolic Doctrine respecting salvation by faith in Christ. When I say Apostolic I mean the doctrine of SS. Peter and John, as well as of St. Paul, for all being full of the Holy Ghost preached the same. Few places, however, have been more perverted in order to uphold a heresy which, if St. Paul had been alive now, he would have abhorred and denounced as fatal to the whole Revelation of the Son of God, and that is Antinomianism. Two questions must be considered with reference to it. How was the heathen jailor to understand it, and if it is of the widest and most general application; which assuredly it is, how must it be understood now? How must they take it to themselves and realize it who are not heathen, but have been brought up in the faith of Christ?

The Philippian jailor, to whom the words were first addressed, had never in all probability heard the Name of Jesus Christ before. He had heard of the most high God, for the woman with the spirit of Python had gone about crying aloud that Paul and Silas were His servants, and on account of this the spirit was exorcised and this ended in the Apostles being committed to his custody. But we must assume that he knew nothing about the Lord Jesus, even though some in his hearing may, perhaps, have pronounced His Name.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," then meant to him, "Believe on Him Whom we are now about to set forth to thee;" and they there and then began to set Him forth, for they spake unto him "the word of the Lord." Now what was this "word of the Lord" which they spake? The reader must remember that when they bade him "believe on the Lord Jesus" they bade him believe on a crucified Jew, as able to save him and his house from the wrath of God, and to be to him everything that a human being needs in the way of salvation.

Now this "word of the Lord" must have been the same in substance with the word which this very Apostle wrote to the Christians of this very place some ten years after: "Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery (or a thing to be

Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

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tenaciously held to) to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a slave, and was made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him the name which is above every name." (Phil. ii. 5-9.)

Nothing short of this would have answered the Apostle's purpose, which was to excite in this poor heathen such a belief in Jesus the crucified Jew, as would enable him to commit his soul to Him for time and for eternity. Such must have been the "word of the Lord." It must show him how—on what principle—he could exercise faith in Him so as to be saved. But did they call upon him in his then state to believe anything respecting the Church and the Sacraments of Christ? Unquestionably, for St. Paul would certainly not baptize a man who was totally ignorant of the grace of union with Christ which he would receive, and the obligations to serve Christ which he would come under, by being baptized.

But are these words of universal application? Can they be applied to Christian people brought up from infancy in the profession of belief in Christ? Most certainly. Such persons may have lived all their lives without ever coming to Him, without ever once having asked God with any sincerity to cleanse them in His Blood, without ever once having treated Him as if He were a risen and living Christ, diffusing power and grace throughout the Church, without ever having asked His Intercession. So that they may have lived without God in His own world, without Christ in His own Church: and so these words must be applied to them. They must be called upon to believe in the sense of realizing Him, consciously coming to Him, laying hold of or apprehending Him (Phil. iii. 12). By this individual, personal realizing of Christ, by thus knowingly and willingly coming to Him and having converse with Him, they enter into conscious possession of all the treasures of His Redemption, and the treasures of His Redemption are such that they demand a *conscious* holding of them.

So that from beginning to end it is true, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

This wonderful passage is often used to disparage all that is external in Christianity, especially the Church as the visible Body of

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

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and

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Christ, and the Sacraments, as means of union with Him in that Body; but they who thus use it ought plainly to be told that they themselves, enlightened though they deem themselves, have yet to believe in Jesus Christ, for at present they do not half believe in Him, they all but reject some of His most startling words; they do not really believe in Him when He says, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Till they can be got to believe in the Lord Jesus in this His capacity of the living Bread and as feeding us with Himself through giving us His Flesh, then and not till then will they exercise whole and entire belief in Him—then, and not till then, will His Sacramental treasures be fully theirs.

Thus from first to last we have to "believe in Jesus Christ"—our faith in Him is ever to be renewed, stirred up, strengthened.

"Thou shalt be saved." Saved from what—for the very word saving requires the idea of something from which we are saved? By faith in Him then we are saved—from the wrath of God, from eternal condemnation, from death as a curse and evil, from a life of sin, from ignorance of God and indifference to His Will, from pride, from self-sufficiency, from a hard heart, from covetousness, from impurity, from fraud and deceit, and if there be any other thing against which God teaches us to pray we are saved from that evil thing.

"And thy house." Does this mean the children of his house only? No, for it is said in the next verse

32. "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." But it does mean that his acceptance of the word of God in true faith would be, in a measure, imputed to his household, so that God for his sake, as the head, would give to those who could exercise it some measure of the same faith, and those who could not, as the little children, He would account holy, according to the principle laid down in 1 Corinth. vii. 14.

33. "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes," &c. This account must have been received from an eye-witness.

"He washed their stripes." This stands in strong contrast with



washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, <sup>d</sup> he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

<sup>d</sup> Luke v. 29.  
& xix. 6.

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his former roughness and cruelty. He thrust them into the inner and therefore darker and fouler prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. Now he washes their stripes, apparently himself performing the act. From this also we gather how severe the beating must have been.

“And was baptized, he and all his, straightway.” Upon this Chrysostom says, “He washed them and was washed. Those he washed from their stripes, himself was washed from his sins.”

“He and all his.” This, as verse 15, is taken as in favour of infant baptism, but taken literally it seems to go further; for supposing that there were no little children in the household, and all were able to understand the word of the Lord, yet in a household of probably many dependents and slaves, there must have been various degrees of faith, and yet none had their baptism deferred, all were baptized, as we say, by wholesale: there seems not to have been time for separate private examination of the state of mind, or heart, of each one. This can only have been either by a very special outpouring of the Spirit on all in the house, or because, as I said, the more perfect faith of the master was accepted on behalf of the less perfect faith of ignorant slaves.

34. “And when he had brought them into his house . . . rejoiced, believing in God,” &c. He follows up his humanity by hospitality. Regardless of the command to keep them safely, and being assured that they would bring no wrong upon him, he treated them not as prisoners, but as friends.

“Rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” Those who have never known what it is to have God, and His Son, and forgiveness and immortality in glory and happiness presented to them for the first time as new truths, can scarcely realize what joy an unveiling of eternal good things must have been to a well-disposed heathen, whose heart by means unknown to us God had prepared to receive such truths readily, and revealed them to him with certainty, and with such holy power by His servant. It was a flood of

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

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

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, ° being Romans, and have cast us ° ch. xxii. 25.

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light shed upon what before was darkness. It was the sudden discovery of a new world, a new life, a new dignity, a new filial relationship to the Father of all. He might well rejoice, and no small part of his joy, we may be assured, was that those who belonged to him were made partakers of the same benefits.

“Believing in God with all his house.” But had he not been told to believe in Jesus Christ? Yes, but through believing in Christ he believed in God the Father, Who had sent Him. The two beliefs, if true and sincere, are one and inseparable. “Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

In reviewing the whole transaction I cannot help believing that, notwithstanding his occupation and his apparent want of feeling for his prisoners, his heart was like Lydia's, one of those which God had specially prepared.

35. “And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants,” &c. The serjeants in this case were lictors, carrying an axe bound about with rods.

“Let those men go.” Why did they not try them to ascertain whether the charges against them were false or not? It is most probable that they felt the injustice of the proceedings of the previous day, and desired to get rid of them as quietly as possible.

36. “And the keeper of the prison . . . go in peace.” It is not improbable that the jailor felt the danger in which they were in from the violence of the populace, who had been thoroughly set against them by the misrepresentation of the masters of the damsel who had the spirit of Python.

37. “But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned,” &c. We learn from this that a Christian may assert his civil rights and immunities as a citizen to save him from degrading punishment. In this case St. Paul had submitted to the

into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

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

39 And they came and besought them, and brought † *Matt.* viii. 34. *them* out, and † desired *them* to depart out of the city.

‡ *ver.* 14.      40 And they went out of the prison, ‡ and

punishment for reasons which I have given as very probable on verse 22. He had submitted, as it were, under protest. Now he demands that some apology should be made for the injustice with which he had been treated. He demands that the strategoi themselves should come in person and fetch them out of prison. Otherwise it might have been said that they had been permitted to escape.

38. "And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared," &c. The magistrates had offended against the law, and it was quite in the power of their former prisoners to indict them before the governor of the province, who would send up the case to Rome, and in the ordinary course of things they would have been punished by removal from their offices.<sup>1</sup>

39, 40. "And they came and besought them . . . comforted them, and departed." From this we gather that the magistrates received the lesson which St. Paul desired to teach them, that they must not yield to popular clamour, and that they must examine into the rights of each case before they inflicted punishment.

"Desired them to depart out of the city." We are not to take this as if it meant desiring to get rid of their preaching, for of this they knew nothing, but rather desiring that their lives should not be endangered by any further tumult.

"They went out of the prison . . . they comforted them." The

<sup>1</sup> "Lex Porcia (passed A. D. C. 508), virgas ab omnium civium Romanorum corpore amovet."—Cicero pro Rabirio, c. 3, and "In Verrem," v. 86. "Faciens est vinciri civem Romanum, scelus verberari." Hence, as Cicero testifies ("Verr.," v. 57), "Illa vox et imploratio 'Civis Romanus sum' multis in ultimis terris opem, inter barbaros et salutem tulit."—Note in Wordsworth.

entered into *the house of Lydia*: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

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change of person here from the first person plural to the third person, implies that Luke continued in Philippi; and this accords with the fact that Paul, when in Athens, did not send for him, but only for Silas and Timotheus.

## CHAP. XVII.

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

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1. "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came," &c. Amphipolis was situated about thirty miles to the south-west of Philippi, on a bend of the river Strymon, a little above where it discharges itself into the sea. It was formerly called *ενία ὁδοί*, because a number of roads met here. Its name has not survived in that of any modern town.

"Apollonia." About thirty miles from Amphipolis, and thirty six from Thessalonica, but its exact situation is unknown.

"They came to Thessalonica." The principal city of Macedonia. It still survives as Saloniki, a town next to Constantinople in importance, and containing now 70,000 inhabitants, the greater part of whom are Jews; who, however, are no part of the old colony of Jews, but are descendants of those who took refuge here from persecution in Spain. Thessalonica was a free city, and allowed to retain its Greek institutions. All offenders, therefore, would be brought before the demos, or popular assembly, and the magistrates were called *politarchai* (*πολιάρχαι*).

"Where there was a synagogue of the Jews," rather the synagogue. No doubt Paul passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia apparently without preaching there, in order that he might the sooner reach a place in which there was a synagogue; and if so a population of

2 And Paul, as his manner was, "went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

<sup>a</sup> Luke iv. 16. ch. ix. 20. & xiii. 5, 14. & xiv. 1. & xvi. 13. & xix. 8.  
<sup>b</sup> Luke xviv. 26, 46. ch. xviii. 28. Gal. iii. 1.

¶ Or, *whom*, said he, *I* preach.

<sup>c</sup> ch. xxviii. 24.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. xv. 22, 27, 32, 40.

3 Opening and alleging, <sup>b</sup> that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, || whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 <sup>c</sup> And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and <sup>d</sup> Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

3. "And that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Some unimportant difference in the readings of the principal Uncials, as A., D., "This is Christ Jesus whom I preach unto you." The Textus Receptus supported by H., L., P., and most Cursives.

Jews and devout proselytes, to whom the name and worship of the true God was not unknown.

2, 3. "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them . . . Jesus, whom I preach unto you," &c. In this he again held to the principle that salvation must be proclaimed "to the Jews first."

"That Christ must needs have suffered." That is, he endeavoured by appeal to the Scriptures to remove the great obstacle which they had in accepting Jesus as the Christ in that He was a suffering Messiah. They looked for a Messiah putting himself at the head of their nation and triumphing over his enemies by carnal weapons.

4. "And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas," &c. "Consorted with," rather "were added to," *i. e.*, they not only were persuaded to believe in Christ individually, but to be added to the fellowship of which the Apostles were the nucleus, *i. e.*, the Church of Christ.

"Devout Greeks," *i. e.*, devout worshippers of the true God from among the Gentiles, to whom the Law had been a schoolmaster, to bring them now to Christ.

"And of the chief women not a few." See xiii. 50, and notes thereon.

5. "But the Jews which believed not . . . certain lewd fellows of the baser sort."

5 ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of ° Jason, and sought to ° Rom. xvi. 21. bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, 'These that have turned the world upside down are come ' ch. xvi. 20. hither also ;

7 Whom Jason hath received : and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, ° saying that there is § Luke xxiii. 2  
John xix. 12.  
1 Pet. ii. 13. another king, *one* Jesus.

5. "The Jews which believed not." "Which believed not" omitted by N, A., B., E., many Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, &c.

"Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort." Lewd here signifies rather bad, or wicked generally, than lustful. Latham gives from an Elizabethan writer, "Before they did oppress the people only by colour of a lewd custom, *i. e.*, a wicked, tyrannical one."

"Of the baser sort." Literally, of those who frequented the agora—idlers in the market-place, where the scum of the people lounged about ready to take part in any mischief.

"Assaulted the house of Jason." A Jew, whose original name was Joshua, Grecized into Jason. It appears from what follows that St. Paul lodged here. He is supposed by some to be the Jason to whom Paul, in Rom. xvi. 21, sends greeting as one of his kinsmen.

6. "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers." From the latter part of this verse we gather that the preaching of the Gospel had produced a far greater stir in heathen society than we should have gathered from the comparatively small number of converts. As in Jewry so in heathendom, the great and noble and rich affected ignorance and indifference, but they nevertheless knew that a greater and stronger power was now at work in the world than had ever been heard of before.

7, 8. "Whom Jason hath received . . . when they heard these things." The preaching of St. Paul constantly set forth a King to Whom all owed entire submission of body and soul, and the coming

8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

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

<sup>h</sup> ch. ix. 25. <sup>h</sup> ¶ And <sup>h</sup> the brethren immediately sent  
ver. 14. away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind,

of the King in glory to take final possession of His world-wide kingdom, and this King exercising the kingly office of universal Judge. It was very likely, then, that such teaching should be wilfully misrepresented by his enemies as putting another in the place of Cæsar.

“They troubled the people.” Because the emperors were jealous of the smallest rumour of another competitor for the world’s power, and none at that time could understand a kingdom “not of this world.”

9. “And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.” That is, when they had taken bail for the good behaviour of the inmates of Jason’s house, that they should do nothing contrary to the decrees of Cæsar.

10. “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea.” They feared further disturbance if Paul preached any more openly in the synagogues. So they at once took steps to send him to a place where they knew the Jews would more readily receive the word, or at least were not so likely to oppose it with violence.

“Berea.” A city about sixty miles west of Thessalonica. It exists yet as Verria, with a population of 18,000.

11. “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word,” &c. “More noble.” Literally, more well-born, of better lineage; applied here, of course, not to indicate their natural parentage or descent as being nobler, but that their conduct better accorded with true nobility of birth than that of the Thessalonians.

“Searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

and 'searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.

1 Isai. xxxiv.  
18. Luke xvi.  
29. John v. 39.

This is a famous text, cited constantly by some in favour of the right of private judgment, and by others in favour of bringing everything which we are taught by human teachers to the test of Scripture; and rightly so with respect to both these inferences. It is not merely the right, but the duty of all persons to read the Scriptures, and not only to read, but to "mark, learn, and inwardly digest them;"—that we may do this we pray in one of the best-known collects of the Church.

But those who search the Scriptures in a jealous, self-asserting spirit should remember a few things. First, if they are privileged to search the Scriptures for themselves, so were the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and these Fathers and Doctors seem to have both known the letter, and been permeated with the spirit, of the Scriptures as much, or more, as a rule, than modern expositors; and these Fathers and early teachers were infinitely more likely to be right than any private person who brings now his unaided private judgment to bear upon the sacred volume.

Then, in the next place, those who search the Scriptures to verify the doctrines of their teachers, should remember that it is only due to the Scriptures as the written Word of God, to deal honestly with them—to know, if possible, all their statements upon the subject to be investigated, and to give its due weight to every statement, and that in the light of its context, for almost every statement of the Bible forms part of a context, the meaning of which must, as far as possible, be ascertained.

And the man (or woman) who searches the Scriptures for the purpose of ascertaining how far a teacher, or a father, or an expositor is right in his interpretations, should also remember that his teacher can read, and probably does read, the Scriptures more than he does—that if he is taught by the Spirit so may his teacher be—that if he is Christ's, so also his instructor may be Christ's, and so he should approach the study of Holy Scripture (I mean for the purpose of judging the opinion of those in authority) in a spirit of deep humility, considering himself that, owing to his own weakness and ignorance, which he shares with his teacher, he too may be mistaken.

I beg it to be understood that these words of caution are not for a



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

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. x. 23. 14 <sup>k</sup> And then immediately the brethren sent

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13. "Stirred up." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, and Æth.; but N, A., B., D., some Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm., add, "and troubling" (καὶ ταρασσόντες).

moment to be applied to the devotional reading of Scripture—only to the critical and controversial. The spirit of the Christian respecting Scripture is well expressed in the words of the Psalmist, "Lord, what love have I unto thy law, all the day long is my study in it."

It may be asked, then, were these Bereans qualified in all the points I have alluded to, to judge of the doctrines which St. Paul preached? Most probably not, but the matter of St. Paul's preaching did not require it. St. Paul preached on the necessity of believing first in a suffering Messiah, and then, after that, in the same Messiah being exalted: and this truth permeated all the Messianic prophecies, and was the key to the Messianic doctrine of the Old Testament. And so we read,

12. "Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks," &c. The humble, patient, honest investigation of the Scriptures will always end in belief, and the belief extended itself beyond the circle of hereditary Judaism to the more honourable of the Gentiles of the city. As we have noticed with respect to Sychar in Samaria, there seems to have been some special preparation by providences unknown to us to make these people receive the Gospel so much more readily.

13, 14. "But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God," &c. They "persecuted him from city to city," "even unto strange cities." Their exceeding rancour is well described in the Epistle to the Thessalonians. "The Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men" (1 Thess. ii. 14, 15).

"To go, as it were, to the sea." Rather, as according to most of the principal MSS., "as far as the sea." It is probable that they took shipping at some small port and came to Athens.

away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and <sup>1</sup>receiving a commandment unto <sup>1</sup> ch. xviii. 5. Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

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14. "As it were" (*ἀρ*). So H., L., P., most Cursives; but "as far as" (*ἕως*), in N, A., B., E., many Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Copt.

"But Silas and Timotheus abode there still." As Luke had been left at Philippi, it is most probable that St. Paul was now for the first time in this journey, absolutely alone.

"And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas," &c. The limits of these notes altogether preclude me from giving any account of Athens, such as I have given of other cities. The reader will find thirty most interesting and learned pages, adorned with a multitude of small landscapes, views of buildings, gems, portraits, ground plans, &c., in Lewin's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul." And also a long chapter, the tenth, in Conybeare and Howson's "Life of St. Paul" is devoted to describing the scenery of Athens, the Piræus and the Long Walls, the Agora, the Acropolis, the Painted Porch and the Garden, Greek Religion, the Unknown God, Greek Philosophy, the Stoics and Epicureans, all introductory to St. Paul's very short speech or address. It will be sufficient to say that Athens was then a decaying city, crowded with memorials of a former greatness which had utterly passed away. Through some fate, or rather providence, it had always taken the wrong side in the times of Grecian independence, and of Macedonian and still more so of Roman conquest. It had lost its trade and its place as a metropolis of a very large part of Greece, but the conquerors, in consideration of its former fame and place in the world, had accorded to it the privileges of a free city, so that it was still intensely Greek rather than Roman. It is to be remembered that it was not the end of St. Paul's journey, but he took it on his way to Corinth, which was then a far more populous and important city, in fact the chief city of Greece.

"And receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus," &c. I do not think that this means that St. Paul could not bear the

16 ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, <sup>his</sup> spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city <sup>2 Pet. ii. 8.</sup> || wholly given to idolatry.  
Or, full of idols.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews,

solitude and yearned for companionship, but that most probably he thought he saw that there was an opening there for the Gospel, and so he sent for assistance, it being well nigh impossible that a missionary should work successfully alone. If he preached and made converts, others must be at hand to instruct them and confirm them in the faith.

16. "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred," &c.

"Wholly given to idolatry." Properly the word *κασιδιωλος* must mean full, or crowded with idols, just as *κατάδενδρος* signifies full of trees. The number which filled the public places of resort seems incredible. Pliny says that there were above three thousand such statues in Athens; Pausanias, that there was no place where so many were to be seen. Petronius, a satiric poet, says that it was easier to find gods than men in Athens.

The sight of this multitude of statues, some of them chiselled by the first sculptors in the world, stirred the spirit of Paul. The marbles which seem to live and breathe, and whose beauty and grace we all but worship, he looked upon with abhorrence. They were to him impersonations of everything evil; they expressed the deification of lust, cruelty, revenge, fraud, malice, and falsehood, and the deification of these evil things, not in the far-off past, but now at that moment enthralling and debasing the souls for which Christ died; so his spirit was stirred, the spirit of the faithful and devout Jew, on whose heart was written that law of God, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them." In no sense had the law of liberty, the liberty with which Christ has made us free, reached such things. No matter how divine the beauty, their use was accursed.

17. "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons," &c. Why is it said that, after being stirred in spirit by the sight of the multitude of idols, he disputed with the Jews, who abhorred them as much as he did? Because he knew that if the Jews were to be such witnesses for the truth as

and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will

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God intended them to be, they must not be mere monotheists, but believers in God as the Father of His only Son Jesus, and purifying the hearts of men by His Spirit. This, and not monotheistic Judaism, was destined by God to cleanse the world of the worship of such gods.

“With the devout persons”—*i.e.*, with the Proselytes.

“And in the market daily.” This market was the famous Agora, used not only as a market, or place of business, but for philosophical discussion, for in it was the Stoa Poecile, the painted Porch, where Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy, lectured and disputed, and from which his followers got their name of Stoicks, or Men of the Porch.

18. “Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him.” The Epicureans were the agnostics of that day. They believed that there were gods, but that these gods had not created and did not govern the world; that they were absolutely indifferent to human affairs; that the world and the various creatures which inhabit it came into being through a “fortuitous concourse of atoms, uncontrolled by any superior intellect who might superintend the bringing of all things into being.” They taught that, if men would be truly wise, they must get rid of all notions of a future life, and judgment to come, and retribution; and though it might not have been the teaching of their master Epicurus, yet in St. Paul’s time they had got to believe that pleasure, intellectual or sensual, was the highest good; that a man was under no obligation to restrain his appetites, except so far as the too free indulgence of those appetites interfered with his enjoyment. Their practical ethics were summed up in the words of the Apostle: “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” Between such teaching as this and that of Jesus there was nothing in common; and it was pretty much the same with the other sect mentioned here—the Stoicks. They believed in a supreme God, but rather as an *anima mundi*, a soul of the world; and so not to be contemplated as above it, or apart from it, much less governing it, for they believed all

this || babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter  
 || Or, *base fel-* forth of strange gods: because he preached unto  
*low.* them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto  
 || Or, *Mars'* || Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new  
*Hill.* It was the highest court in Athens. doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is* ?

things to be by fate—God Himself being subject to fate. They seem to have in many respects answered to our modern Pantheists. They believed in the immortality of the soul, much as the Buddhists do—that the purified souls were absorbed into the Deity, and that the souls of the wicked were annihilated. Their ideal of the perfect man was that he was apathetic. He was to have mastered his passions, so as to present to his fellow men an austere type of virtue, but one withal morose and unfeeling—as contrary to the loving character of Christ as can well be conceived. In Epictetus, in Marcus Aurelius, in Seneca we have many utterances of a seemingly high-toned morality; but it has no such foundation as Christian ethics have in the love of God, and the imitation of Jesus Christ.

“And some said, What will this babbler say?” There is not one word of their encountering him with argument—a fanatical Jew, as they deemed him to be, was beneath their notice,—and yet they seemed to have a misgiving that there was a something in his teaching which they had never heard before, and that they had better find out what it was.

The word “babbler” is curious—it signifies seed-picker. This name was given to a small bird who picked up seeds in the furrows; and then it was given to those who picked up stray bits of information, and retailed them to others.

“Other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached,” &c. Some have supposed, because the plural gods is used, that the Anastasis which Paul preached in conjunction with Jesus, was understood to be a separate Deity.

19. “And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know,” &c. . . . “what these things mean.” The court of the Areopagus was the supreme court of the Athenians upon all subjects relating to religion. Its origin seems to have been in prehistoric times. The place of its session was called Mars' Hill, be-

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

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

22 ¶ Then Paul stood in the midst of || Mars' hill, and said, *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that* ¶ Or, the court of the Areopagites. in all things ye are too superstitious.

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cause no less a personage than the god Ares, or Mars, was supposed to have been tried on it. If St. Paul was seriously accused of bringing in the worship of new and strange gods, he would have to be tried before this court. It is matter of doubt, however, whether he was brought before it as a criminal, on the ground of having attempted to introduce a new object of worship, or whether they desired that he should make known his doctrine in a more conspicuous place, and before a more venerable audience than was to be found in the Agora.

“What this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?” The doctrine of atonement, through such a sacrifice as that of Christ, and of resurrection through the power of His Resurrection, would be absolutely new to them. Any faint knowledge which some of them might have had of Judaism would have not helped them in the least to understand it.

21. “For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time,” &c. “Strangers which were there.” No doubt, foreigners, Italians and others, who had come for purposes of education.

“Spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.” It is singular that the same character should be reproachfully given to them by their greatest orator, four hundred years before this. “Tell me whether going up and down in the market-place asking each other, ‘Is there any new thing?’ is the business of your lives?” (Demosth. Phil. i. 43).

“Some new thing.” Literally, some thing newer than the last new thing; the adjective being in the comparative. Theophrastus, e.g., uses the self-same word in describing the questions of the loquacious prattler of society, “Is there anything new . . . is there anything yet newer?” (Plumptre).

22. “Then Paul stood up in the midst of Mars' hill, and said,

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your || devotions, I  
 # Or, gods that ye worship,  
 2 Thess. 2. 4.

. . . ye are too superstitious." The word rendered "superstitious" may be by no means a reproachful term. "The word 'deisidaimon' (*Δεισιδαιμων*)," says Mede, "by etymology signifies a worship of Dæmon (Gods), and was anciently used in this sense, and so you shall find it often in Clemens Alexandrinus his Protrepticon [and also in Stromata, book vii., *Δεισιδάμων ὁ δεδωκ τὰ δαιμονία*], not to speak of others." We are to remember, of course that the heathers by no means used the word demon in a bad sense—rather the contrary; and here St. Paul uses the word in a much less offensive way than appears in our translation. It may, perhaps, be most correctly rendered: "I perceive that in all things you are somewhat more addicted to the worship of demons (or rather, perhaps, to Deity-worship) than others." By so rendering it we avoid the sinister meaning of demon which S. Paul certainly never intended. The differences amongst learned persons respecting the translation are extraordinary. Alford renders, "I perceive that in all things you are very religious." Bishop Jacobson as "more than ordinarily religious." Plumptre, "I observe you as being in all things more fearful of the gods than others." Lewin, "Ye are devout to excess." The Revisers have in their text "somewhat superstitious," and in their margin, "somewhat religious."

To give an English reader the true idea of the word, demon or deity must be expressed, or it will not be in proper connection with the next verse, which runs—

23. "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions [objects of worship], I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God."

The Apostle seems to conciliate the Athenians in that they desired to omit from their objects of worship no deity worthy of worship, and so they erected an altar to the unknown and incomprehensible God. This, at once, enables him to rebut the accusation that he was a setter forth of strange gods. On the contrary, he set forth One to Whom, in their excess of worship, they had already erected an altar. Unwittingly they had erected one to the true God. Not knowing Him, as the very inscription shows, they worshipped Him ignorantly, and St. Paul would have them worship Him knowingly and intellectually.

Who was this "unknown God"? St. Paul's ensuing words—

UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

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23. "Whom therefore . . . him declare I." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Arm., &c.; but N, A., B., D., read, "What ye ignorantly worship, it, or that, declare I," &c.

"whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him," &c. — seem to demand that this altar should be the expression of a recognition of, and feeling after, some infinitely greater and worthier type of Deity than the statues and temples and altars all round about it bore witness to: but the question is, was there any particular Divine Essence dimly shadowed out which those who erected this altar, and those who inscribed it, yearned after? Lewin and others give reason and argument for supposing that the God of Israel was really intended. "Even if by the Unknown God were meant some Deity with Whose nature they were unacquainted, he was justified in making such an appeal; but there is a reasonable probability that by 'the unknown God' was actually meant Jehovah. Since the conquest of Alexander the Great, an intimacy had subsisted between the Jews and the Greeks, and in particular, the Athenians had entered into a treaty with that singular people and had greatly honoured Hyrcanus the high priest,<sup>1</sup> and it is scarcely credible that the Athenians, who adopted the gods of all foreigners, should have excluded Jehovah, Whose mighty acts could not but be familiar to

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<sup>1</sup> For an account of this see Josephus, "Antiquities," book xiv. chap. viii. sec. 5. The following extract will show the nature of the honours: "Since Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, the high priest and Ethnarch of the Jews, continues to bear goodwill to our people in general, and to every one of our citizens in particular, and treats them with all sorts of kindness; and when any of the Athenians come to him either as ambassadors, or on any occasion of their own, he receives in an obliging manner, and sees that they are conducted back in safety, of which we have had several former testimonies; it is now also decreed . . . to honour him with a crown of gold, the usual reward according to the law, and to erect his statue in brass in the temple of Demus, and of the Graces; and that this present of a crown shall be proclaimed publicly in the theatre, in the Dionysian shows, while the new tragedies are acting; and in the Panathenæan, and Eleusinian and Gymnical shows also; and that the commanders shall take care, while he continues in his friendship, and preserves his goodwill to us, to return all possible favour to the man for his affection and generosity," &c.

It is impossible that an inquiring nation like the Athenians should be ignorant that this high priest of the Jews differed from all others in that he worshipped but one God, and that as a faithful Jew he would be extremely reserved in speaking of the name and attributes of this God to strangers—that he would permit no image of Him in His temple, and so of all people they were most likely to erect an altar to Him as "the Unknown God."



24 <sup>a</sup> God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is <sup>o</sup> Lord of heaven and earth, <sup>p</sup> dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

<sup>n</sup> ch. xiv. 15.  
<sup>o</sup> Matt. xi. 25.  
<sup>p</sup> ch. vii. 48.

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, <sup>q</sup> as though he needed any thing, seeing <sup>r</sup> he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

<sup>q</sup> Ps. l. 8.  
<sup>r</sup> Gen. ii. 7.  
Num. xvi. 22.  
Job xii. 10. &  
xxvii. 3, &  
xxxiii. 4. Is.  
xlii. 5, & lvii.  
16. Zech. xii.  
l.

the neighbouring nations. Had Jehovah, like the false gods, been worshipped as an idol, the Athenians would have erected to Him a statue and a temple, but the Jews religiously abstained from uttering any name, *i.e.*, any proper name, and adored Him only as a spiritual Being." Dion Cassius speaks of the God of the Jews as *ἀόρητον*, not to be expressed, and the Emperor Caligula, in his answer to the Jews, calls Him *τὸν ἀκατονόμαστον ὑμῖν*, "Him that may not be named by you," and Lucan and Trebellius Pollio call Him "incertus Deus," and Justin Martyr relates, that among the heathen, the God of the Jews was commonly called *Πάγκρυφος*, or all-hidden. No wonder, then, that the Athenians should inscribe an altar to Him as "the unknown God."

"Whom [or what] therefore ye ignorantly worship, him [or that] declare I unto you." This seems to imply that the object of their worship on this altar was not an unknown and unknowable abstraction, but a definite Divine Person or Essence Whom though they knew Him not at present, yet they might know if they would, and such a view seems best to correspond with their past relations with the Jews, and especially with the high priest.

23, 24. "Him declare I unto you. . . . God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven," &c. And now we have St. Paul's declaration of God. It begins with the enunciation of Him as the Creator, and as the Creator of so vast an universe He cannot dwell in temples such as those with which Athens was crowded. "Behold," the wise man had said, "the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (1 Kings, viii. 27.)

25. "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything." But had not God Himself ordained that He should be worshipped with burnt offerings and sacrifices? Assu-

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and <sup>Deut. xxxii.</sup> the bounds of their <sub>8.</sub> habitation ;

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26. "Of one blood." So D., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Arm. ; but N., A., B., 13, 14, 27, 29, 40, 61, 96, Vulg., Sah., Copt., read, "of one," omitting "blood."

redly ; but then these sacrifices were not offered with the idea that God should feed on them as needing food, but that in their use men should confess sin as deserving death, and show forth the Atonement with which in due time God would reconcile the world unto Himself.

"Seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things," He cannot Himself need the sacrifice, but the offerer may need it ; and he may and does need a form of worship which sets forth such ideas as the guilt of sin, the need of propitiation, the hope of a future Redeemer, and amity with God, so that God is reconciled to him, and in token gives him to eat of His table.

26. "And hath made of one blood [or, out of one] all nations of men for to dwell," &c. Here St. Paul asserts the universal brotherhood of mankind, as all from the loins of one father, and thereby teaches that no one race was superior to another, for all differences were what men would call accidental, but which St. Paul goes on to state were providential. God had determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation. By these words St. Paul no doubt asserts that not only the place upon the earth of each race was pre-ordained, but those epochs in the history of each which were beyond man's control, but which contributed to make them what they were, such as the appearance of certain teachers among them, their conquest of other nations, or their being conquered by others. For instance, it was not by the mere will of their kings, or leaders, or statesmen that each of the four great empires of antiquity, in its turn, came in contact with the Jews. As conquerors they subdued that singular nation, unique in its knowledge of the one God, and of a purer morality and truer idea of worship. With this their kings and leaders became acquainted through such men as Daniel, a faithful witness to God in the courts of the two greatest monarchies on the earth. This was all brought about, not through chance, not through some uncontrolled course of events, but through God Himself, as was also the appear-

27 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might  
 ' Rom. i. 20. feel after him, and find him, " though he be not  
 " ch. xiv. 17. far from every one of us ;

\* Col. i. 17. 28 For \* in him we live, and move, and have  
 Heb. i. 3.

27. "Seek the Lord," with E., P., and many Cursives; but N, A., B., H., L., many Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm., read, "seek God."

ance of such men amongst them as Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras; and it was through God that they were favoured with such gleams of truth as the Apostle notices in Aratus. Thus the Apostle declares the purpose which God had in determining beforehand such things. It was

27. "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him," &c. All the dispensations of God's providence in the ordering of nations, their migrations, the amount of light vouchsafed to each, all will be found at last, in the great day of the revealing of secrets, to have been ordered by God for one purpose, that they "should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him." God so ordered His dispensations, that the better spirits should be incited to be earnest in seeking Him. When men grope in the dim twilight for something they desire to find, they show their sincerity, and sooner or later they will find God. If they do not find him on this side of the grave, God will, no doubt, take into account their "feeling after him." It was the only faith in the unseen and eternal which they could exercise, and He will "count it to them for righteousness." The rule of right proceeding from God Himself will be made good in their case. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. viii. 12).

"Though he be not far from every one of us."

28. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being," &c. Nothing can be imagined nearer to us than God. In a sense He is nearer to us than ourselves. He sustains our life—every motion of our bodies is by His permission, and in Him we are. We cannot know, we cannot see into, the depths of our spirits as He can. The best comment on this is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and

our being; 'as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. † Tit. i. 12.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, 'we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. \* Isa. xl. 18.

30 And 'the times of this ignorance God winked \* ch. xiv. 16.  
Rom. iii. 25.

intents of the heart" (iv. 12). God then is very near to us indeed, and yet, in another sense, because of our alienation from Him through sin and evil, He may be very far off, but still never so far as to be out of hearing, never so alienated as to be above feeling for us.

"As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."<sup>1</sup> This is from Aratus, a poet of Cilicia; and another poet and philosopher, Cleanthes, in a hymn to the Father of Gods and men, expresses the same truth in almost exactly the same words, "For we thine offspring are."

This is a great and noble truth. But does the Apostle hold it to be sufficient, as many now, even in our Church, seem to do, who repeat it and dwell on it, well nigh to the exclusion of every other truth? No, he draws no maudlin conclusion from it, as if God, because a Father, cannot be severe, and will not punish; but proceeds to teach that we dishonour the Father of all by making an image of Him, and worshipping Him under any form—the Apostle hereby setting forth that He is an omnipresent Spirit, of whose form or mode of manifestation no one could possibly have any conception.

29, 30. "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God . . . everywhere to repent." Respecting images of the Deity, the author of the book of wisdom says:—"Man made them, and he that borrowed his own spirit fashioned them: but no man can make a god like unto himself, for being mortal, he worketh a dead thing with wicked hands, for he himself is better than the things which he worshippeth: whereas he lived once, but they never" (xv. 16).

"God winked at." Rather God overlooked, so that He did not

<sup>1</sup> The words of Aratus are *Τὸ ἴδιον καὶ γένος ἑστίς τε*, and the words of Cleanthes are *Ἐκ οὗτου γένος ἐσμὲν*.

<sup>b</sup> Luke xxiv.  
47. Tit. ii. 11,  
12. 1 Pet. i.  
14. & iv. 3.

at; but <sup>b</sup> now commandeth all men every where to repent :

<sup>c</sup> ch. x. 42.  
Rom. ii. 16.  
& xiv. 10.

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which <sup>c</sup> he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained ; *whereof* he hath || given assurance unto all *men*, in that <sup>d</sup> he hath raised him from the dead.

|| Or, *offered*  
*faith.*

<sup>d</sup> ch. ii. 24.

punish man for likening Him to what was too often low and base, and at the best infinitely below the nobler conception or idea which their better nature would have assisted them to form.

“ But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”

31. “ Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness,” &c. This is not such a conclusion of his manifestation of God as many would have expected from the Apostle. Instead of repentance because of coming judgment, many would have looked for the Apostle winding up with justification by faith, and assurance of salvation, but what the Apostle does actually conclude with is in accordance with all his teaching. He is not always insisting on justification, he much oftener insists on repentance and coming judgment. He declares that, according to his Gospel, “ God will judge the secrets of men.” In that Epistle of his most occupied with justification, he very solemnly declares as preparatory to it, that “ God will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life ; but to them . . . who obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil ” (Rom. ii. 6-9). And as regards repentance, he declares that the heavenly vision, *i.e.*, the sight of Jesus, which converted him, was given that he should show unto all men that they should “ repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance ” (Acts xxvi. 20).

And yet in the repentance which St. Paul preached, the free grace of God and the reception on our part of that grace through faith was necessarily implied. For if a reasonable and loving God commands such creatures as we are, so weak and helpless, to repent, He must afford us all that is necessary for a deep and genuine repentance. There must be place for repentance—there

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

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed:

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must be the preparation of heart by the spirit convincing of sin, and if repentance is not to turn into despair, there must be the hope, the assured hope, of its being crowned by forgiveness, and acceptance, and deliverance from the tyranny of those habits of sin of which we repent.

The bringing forward of the Lord's Resurrection as an assurance that God will keep His promise, is also in accordance with the usage of St. Paul. In ch. xiii. 37 of this book he appeals to it as the ground of our being able to believe in the full forgiveness of all sin—here as the pledge of future judgment.

32. "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked:" &c. It has been assumed by most commentators that those who mocked were Epicureans, the Agnostics or practical Atheists of the day, and those who postponed their decision were Stoics, who believed in a future state of some sort; but we are to remember that St. Paul preached, not a resurrection *per se*, but a resurrection depending upon—indeed, the result of—the Resurrection of Christ. At this both Epicureans and Stoics would scoff, for St. Paul's future state was not a state of apathy, but a state of life in Christ far more intense and active and energizing than any philosopher had ever dreamed of.

The words "We will hear thee again of this matter," seem not to have been said with any real desire of inquiring further, but in the spirit of Felix's answer to St. Paul, "When I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

33. "So Paul departed from among them." He felt his mission was not to these professors of wisdom. Indeed, he seems to have had some intimation of this, for if his companions, for whom he had sent, had arrived sooner he would have proceeded at once to Corinth. It was only whilst he waited for Silas and Timotheus, that he took the opportunity of declaring to them the Way of Life.

34. "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among

among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

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the which was Dionysius," &c. "Dionysius the Areopagite." On account of his having attained this distinction, he must have passed through some of the highest offices of the city, and have been above sixty years of age. Eusebius, citing the tradition of another Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, speaks of him as the first bishop of Athens. He was also supposed to have suffered martyrdom in the time of Domitian. Chrysostom supposes that Damaris was his wife; but it is very unlikely that, seeing that Dionysius had just been mentioned, his wife should be named as if she was a stranger.

St. Paul never again visited Athens, nor does he once mention the city in any of his epistles. His reception there may be described in his own words to the Corinthians, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. i. 26).

## CHAP. XVIII.

**A**FTER these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

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1. "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth." Corinth was the capital city of all that part of Greece which was called Achaia. It had been utterly destroyed by the Romans under the consul Mummius (B.C. 146), but had been rebuilt by Julius Cæsar in emulation of its former splendour, and had become a very important centre of commerce, having two harbours, one, Lechæum on the west, and the other, Cenchrea on the east of the isthmus. It was proverbial for its wickedness—the word, to Corinthianize (*κορινθιάζεσθαι*), *i. e.*, to live as a Corinthian, being used to stigmatize a life of extreme luxury and profligacy. No place on earth could have been imagined as presenting more unsuitable soil for the seeds of Gospel truth, and yet, whilst the

2 And found a certain Jew named \* Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; \* Rom. xvi. 3. (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews 1 Cor. xvi. 19. 2 Tim. iv. 19. to depart from Rome :) and came unto them.

Church of Athens is never once mentioned, Corinth is constantly visited by the apostle and his companions, and is addressed by St. Paul in two of his principal epistles. Clement of Rome also writes one of the earliest Christian treatises, not included in Scripture, to compose its differences. As there were important places in the land journey between Athens and Corinth—such as Eleusis and Megara—which are not mentioned in the allusions to St. Paul's transit, it is very probable that he came by sea. Lewin conjectures that one of the three shipwrecks alluded to in 2 Corinthians xi. 25, occurred in this short voyage.

2. "And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come," &c. Aquila and Priscilla had no doubt been converted to Christ before St. Paul's visit, or he would not have at once consorted with them, and worked in their workshop. He seems, all through the account of his ministry which has been preserved to us, to have kept up constant communication with them. In Rom. xvi. 3, 4, he sends an affectionate greeting to them, and thanks for having endangered their lives on his account. In 2 Timothy iv. he sends greetings to them at Ephesus through Timothy. When he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians they were with him, and in their turn send greetings to the Church of Corinth (1, xvi. 19).

"Born in Pontus." It is supposed that he was on his way back to his native place, but finding an opening for his trade in the wealthy city of Corinth, he continued there.<sup>1</sup>

Priscilla is a diminutive of Prisca. In several readings of Rom. xvi. 3 (N, A., B.), she is called Prisca.

"Because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from

<sup>1</sup> Lewin, however, notices the fact that there was a Pontius Aquila in the time of Cicero (Epis. Fam. x. 33; Suet. Cæsar, 78), "and so it has been conjectured by some that Aquila may have been a freedman, named after this Pontius Aquila, and that Luke was thus led into the mistake of supposing that Aquila was a native of Pontus." "This, however," he adds, "is mere conjecture, and not to be reconciled with the known accuracy of St. Luke. Aquila was a Jew, and is another instance of a Jew bearing a Roman name"



3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, <sup>b</sup>and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

b ch. xx. 34.  
1 Cor. iv. 12.  
1 Thes. ii. 9.  
2 Thes. iii. 8.  
c ch. xvii. 2.

4 <sup>o</sup> And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Rome." Suetonius notices this, "Judæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes, Româ expulit." ("The Jews, who were constantly making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he banished from Rome.") By this Chrestus, the historian evidently means Christus, the i and e, as Tertullian notices, being almost always confounded. The disturbances which called forth this interference were no doubt the violent outbreaks against the Christians for asserting the Messiahship of Christ; and it was the most natural mistake possible for an ignorant outsider to suppose that the tumults which raged against the claims of Christus, or Chrestus, were excited by Him personally.

That this banishment was not of long continuance we learn from the Epistle to the Romans, written some six years after this, in which epistle a salutation is sent to Aquila and Priscilla, as living again in Rome, and having a church meeting in their house.

3. "And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them . . . they were tentmakers." All Jews, no matter what the affluence of their parents, were required to teach their children a trade, so that, if they lost their property, they might be able to support themselves by their industry. There was a Rabbinic proverb, "He that does not teach his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief."

"By their occupation they were tentmakers." In both Pontus and Cilicia a coarse cloth was made into tent-cloth from the hair of the goats which browsed on the sides of the Taurus. It even took its name from the latter province, and was called Cilicium. From this we must gather that he was receiving no more contributions from the brethren which came from Macedonia, and that he was determined, for wise reasons, not to live on the contributions of the wealthier Corinthians.

4. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded," &c. The Greeks here are not Hellenists, but Gentiles, who

5 And <sup>d</sup> when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was <sup>e</sup> pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus || was Christ.*

<sup>d</sup> ch. xvii. 14, 15.  
<sup>e</sup> Job xxxii. 18, ch. xvii. 3, ver. 29.  
 || Or, is the Christ.

6 And <sup>f</sup> when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, <sup>g</sup> he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, <sup>h</sup> Your blood *be* upon your own heads; <sup>i</sup> I am clean: <sup>k</sup> from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

<sup>f</sup> ch. xiii. 45.  
<sup>g</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 4.  
<sup>h</sup> Neh. v. 13.  
<sup>i</sup> Matt. x. 14, ch. xiii. 5.  
<sup>h</sup> Lev. xx. 9, 11, 12. 2 Sam. i. 16. Ezek. xviii. 13. & xxiii. 4.  
<sup>i</sup> Ezek. iii. 18, 19. & xxxiii. 9. ch. xx. 26.  
<sup>k</sup> ch. xiii. 46. & xxviii. 28.

5. "In the spirit." So H., L., P., many Cursives, Arm.; but N, A., B., D., E., 13, 40, 73, 137, 142, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Æth., read, "in the word."

worshipped the true God in the synagogues, but yet remained in their Gentile state, not having received circumcision.

5. "And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia. Paul was pressed," &c. It has been conjectured that this means that St. Paul worked with new energy because by the contributions which they brought he was no longer under the necessity of working all day at manual labour, but could give all his time to the Gospel.

"Pressed in the spirit." Some MSS. (N, A., B., D.), Vulg., &c., read "the word" instead of "the spirit." We may compare his state to that of Jeremiah, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. xx. 9).

6. "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed," &c. "Shook his raiment." A symbolical action similar to that of shaking the dust off the feet.

"Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." St. Paul must have had in his mind Ezekiel xxxiii. 6: "If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand."

"Henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." This does not mean that he will cease to proclaim the Gospel to the Jews, but that he will no more make their synagogue his chief place of preaching, but will preach more directly to the Gentiles.

7 ¶ And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 14. 8 <sup>1</sup> And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

<sup>m</sup> ch. xxiii. 11. 9 Then <sup>m</sup> spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace;

7. "Named Justus." So A., D<sup>m</sup>, H., L., P., and most Cursive. "Titius Justus," B. "Titus Justus," N, E., Vulg., Copt., Arm.

7. "And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus," &c. Some MSS. (N, E.) read Titus, others (B., D.) Titius Justus. Seeing that Titus was much interested in the Church of Corinth (2 Corinth. vii. 6-14; viii. 16), it has been conjectured that this was the celebrated companion of St. Paul, to whom he wrote the Epistle; but Titus was one of the commonest Roman names, and one who had been taken by the Apostle to Jerusalem when the Apostles and elders were called to decide respecting the circumcision of the Gentiles, would hardly be called "a certain man that worshipped God," *i. e.*, one like Cornelius, devout, but yet not circumcised.

"Whose house joined hard to the synagogue." This can only be mentioned for the purpose of showing that St. Paul, notwithstanding his formal departure from the synagogue, still wished to meet and converse with all Jews who were sincere in their inquiries after the truth.

8. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue . . . much people in this city." This was the Crispus respecting whom St. Paul writes: "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name" (1 Cor. i. 14, 15).

9. "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision," &c. Why should the Lord thus see fit to encourage Paul, when his work among the people of Corinth appeared so prosperous? Evidently because the success of his work excited the malice of the Jews to the uttermost, so that they only waited for the arrival of the proconsul to break out into open hostility against him. Paul knew

10 <sup>n</sup> For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

<sup>n</sup> Jer. i. 18,  
19. Matt.  
xxviii. 20.  
† Gr. *sat*  
there.

11 And he † continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia,

A. D. 56.  
ending.

that all this was brewing, and his spirit for a moment quailed before the rage of the men that were set against him, so that the Lord comforted him with the assurance, that though they set on him they should be restrained from hurting him, (of which the sequel shows the truth), and so he might go on with his work hopefully, and this he did, for we read:

11. "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." This is considered by some to be the whole period of his ministry at this time in Corinth. During these months he wrote the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, and probably did much missionary work in the neighbouring parts of the province of Achaia, for in 2 Cor. i. 1, he speaks of all the saints which are in all Achaia; and churches, such as that at Cenchrea, must have been founded at this time.

12. "And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection," &c. This Gallio was the brother of the philosopher Seneca, who dedicated some of his works to him. His name was Marcus Annæus Novatus, and he took the name of Gallio because he had been adopted by Gallio the rhetorician. He seems to have answered more than any character of Scripture to our modern "Liberal," and having no religious convictions himself, it was easy for him to express a contemptuous toleration of every kind of religious opinion. He seems to have been a man of a temper not easily ruffled, and is called by the poet Statius, and by Seneca his brother "Dulcis Gallio." He had been the favourite of Nero, but afterwards fell under his displeasure, and in order to avoid death at the tyrant's hands, put an end to himself, as did his brother Seneca.

"The deputy," *i.e.*, the pro-consul. "Another proof," Bishop Wordsworth remarks, "of St. Luke's accuracy. Achaia had been an imperial province under Tiberius (Tacit. i. 76), but was restored to the senate by Claudius (Sueton. Claud. 23). The rulers of provinces under the senate were called pro-consuls, those under the emperor *proprætors*."

the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

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

14 And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth,  
° ch. xxiii. 29. Gallio said unto the Jews, ° If it were a matter  
 & xxv. 11, 19. of wrong or wicked lewdness, O *ye* Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of such *matters*.

16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

“The Jews made insurrection with one accord,” &c. Rather rose up against, or made an attack on, Paul—the word insurrection being now used as synonymous with sudden rebellion against a sovereign.

13. “Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.” This means that the religion which Paul preached had not yet been duly authorized by the law, as that of the Jews was. It required a separate act of legalization, as it was not Judaism.

14. “And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness.” The revisers translate this “of wicked villainy.” The word has not that meaning which we usually attach to lewdness, neither is it the same expression as in Acts xvii. 5.

15. “But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law,” &c. “Of words”—literally “of a word.” No doubt in allusion to the preaching of St. Paul, as the preaching of the Word.

“And names.” Whether, for instance, Jesus was rightly entitled to the name of Christ. “And of your law,” *i.e.*, how far the religious code of a separate people like the Jews, was now binding.

“Look ye to it.” This seems to be a sort of warrant for their taking the law into their own hands, as is narrated in verse 17.

16. “And he drave them from the judgment seat.” This does not imply that he used violence at all, but that he dismissed the case and cleared the court, as we now say.

17 Then all the Greeks took <sup>p</sup> Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. <sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. i. 1. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

18 ¶ And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while,

17. "All the Greeks." So D., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Sah., Syriac, Arm., <sup>2</sup>eth.; but N., A., B., Vulg., Copt., omit "the Greeks."

17. "Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat," &c. There is a difference in the reading which must be taken into account. The principal uncials  $\aleph$ , A. B., and Vulgate read "they all," or "all," meaning, of course, those just dismissed, *i. e.*, the Jews, the enemies of Paul. In this case they were angry against Sosthenes, as supposing that he had in some way betrayed their cause, being secretly, and afterwards openly (if he be the same Sosthenes as is mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 1), on the side of Paul.

If, on the contrary, we are to read with most MSS., "all the Greeks," then it means that the Greeks took this opportunity of venting their rage on the Jews, who had been worsted in their attempt to put down Paul, whose preaching it appears had, as is too often the case, been popular with many who yet refused to be reformed by it.

"And Gallio cared for none of those things." There is great difference amongst expositors as to whether these words reflect blame on Gallio, or whether they are rather apologetic—as that he saw that such matters as the Jews brought before him were quite out of his province to decide upon, and he refused to entertain their question.

I have no doubt that these words impute to the pro-consul conduct utterly unworthy of a just and upright judge, in that he allowed an innocent man, or at least one on whom no judicial sentence had been passed, to be beaten openly by a mob in his own court, and before his own judgment seat. Such indifference to the commonest claims of justice and to the dignity of his own court stamps him as utterly unworthy of the office of a judge.

18. "And Paul after this tarried there a good while . . . he had a vow." This seems over and above the year and six months of verse 11.

"Having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow."

and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence

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Respecting the reason for his having taken this vow, it is now impossible to conjecture. Some commentators suppose it to have been the vow of the Nazarite described as to its obligations and ceremonial in Numb. vi.; others deny this. It was no doubt the practice described in Josephus (Jewish War, ii. xv. 1): "It is customary for those who have been afflicted with any distemper, or have laboured under any other difficulties, to make a vow that for thirty days before they offer sacrifices, they will abstain from wine, and will at the expiration shave the head, and burn the hair at the fire of their sacrifices of purification in the temple." When the vow was taken in a foreign land, "during the continuance of the vow the hair was allowed to grow, and at the expiration of the month the head was not (as commonly supposed) shaven, which could only be done at Jerusalem after a purification of seven days, and after the performance of the requisite sacrifices. But as the vow was at an end as regarded the growth of the hair, the shears or scissors, not the razor, were applied, and the hair was sheared or polled, and thenceforth the hair was cut from time to time in the ordinary course, until the Nazarite had an opportunity of going up to Jerusalem. He then purified himself seven days in the temple, and offered the accustomed sacrifices during that period, and then finally shaved his head, and having burnt the hair (together with what had been sheared at the termination of the thirty days), then completed the vow." "If he polled his head in the country," says Lightfoot, "as St. Paul did in Cenchrea, he was to bring his hair and burn it under the cauldron where his peace-offering was boiling, which was in this place of the temple that we are speaking of" (*i. e.*, at the south-east angle of the court of the women in the temple). (Lewin and Lightfoot.)

The fact that St. Paul should not merely have submitted, but should have voluntarily chosen to offer to God such a service as this, is of the utmost significance. It shows us how very different his religion (taking religion to be religious observance) was to what many of us suppose that it must have been. The general idea amongst ultra-Protestants is that he was a man so wholly taken up with preaching Christ crucified that he repudiated all formal observances as being utterly beneath his notice. And yet when we come to look into the facts of his life we find that he rather preached

into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having <sup>9</sup>shorn his head in <sup>r</sup>Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

<sup>9</sup> Numb. vi.

18. ch. xxi.

24.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. xvi. 1.

Christ risen, and that, prompted by his own will, he desired to express his gratitude to God by what was as formal a piece of religious ritual as is to be found in the whole Bible. It has often been said that he did this to please the Jews by showing them that Christianity had not absolutely alienated him from the Law in its ceremonial aspect; but such a view is to be energetically repudiated, for it makes him perform an act of religious devotion, not with the view of being acceptable to God, but of being pleasing to men. There can be no doubt that St. Paul took this vow, and performed its (to us) strange obligations with the view of expressing his gratitude to God by something which was over and above his daily sacrifice of himself. He had received some signal benefit or deliverance. He could not do more in the way of showing his thankfulness by preaching more frequently or earnestly. He already did as much as he could in that way. But there was another way open to him—the way of the Nazarite, a way frequently adopted by his countrymen under the direction of God's word; and he not only chose this, but apparently ordered his journeyings so that he might in due form fulfil it at Jerusalem.

Now this lets us into his whole mind, as regards what is commonly called "Ritualism," that is, the outward accessories of religious worship. We cannot imagine a man who voluntarily took upon him as an act of acceptable devotion all this shearing and shaving, and preserving his hair till he could burn it with his peace offering in the Temple, and in the meantime abstaining from anything that was produced by the vine, even to a grape or a raisin; <sup>1</sup>—we cannot imagine, I say, such a man objecting to, much less denouncing, any one single item of the mild and sober ritual which we of the Church of England have been permitted to preserve. We cannot imagine such a man, who could voluntarily do such things as the Nazarite vow required, objecting to the sign of the Cross in baptism, or at any other time, or in any other place; to turning to

<sup>1</sup> "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernel even to the husk" (Numbers vi. 3, 4).



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

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

\* ch. xix. 21.  
& xx. 16.

21 But bade them farewell, saying, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusa-

19. "And he came." So H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Copt.; but N, A., B., E., Sah., Syriac, &c., read, "they came to Ephesus."

21. "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem." So D., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, &c.; but the whole clause omitted by N, A., B., E., a few Cursives, 13, 14\*, 15, 36, 69, 105, 180, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Arm., Æth.

the East in the Creed; to the ring in marriage; to the eastward position; to the clean white linen surplice, or to any vestment of any sort with which any national or independent church might decree to mark the uniqueness of the great Sacrament of the Gospel. We cannot imagine him objecting to any of these things in anything approaching to a Puritan spirit, or on Puritan grounds.<sup>1</sup> He might, and no doubt would, object to multiplying small details which would make an easy service a difficult one, or which would distract attention from the object of the worship, or its idea, but certainly not on any other ground—unless, of course, anything contravened some important matter in the original institution, such as the right of the laity to the chalice.

This act of the Apostle clearly shows the truth of what I stated in my notes on Chap. XV., that the objection to the circumcision of a Gentile believer was not a matter of ritual, but of covenant—circumcision bringing a man under one covenant, and baptism under another. Again, this act of the Apostle shows that we may lawfully take vows over and above the great baptismal engagement, though the multiplication of them is exceedingly to be deprecated.

19. "And he came to Ephesus, and left them there." Leaving them there seems to mean that he no longer lodged and worked with them, but gave himself entirely to missionary work.

20, 21. "When they desired him to tarry longer time . . . sailed from Ephesus." Why was he so eager about keeping the feast at

<sup>1</sup> By Puritan grounds, I mean the grounds taken by the Puritan leaders at the Savoy or at the Hampton Court Conference.

## ST PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.



London: George Bell.

Revised by the Rev. J. H. W....

lem : but I will return again unto you, 'if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

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

23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over *all* the country of <sup>u</sup> Galatia and Phrygia in order, <sup>x</sup> strengthening all the disciples.

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

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 19.  
Hebr. vi. 3.  
James iv. 15.

Anno  
DOMINI  
58.

<sup>u</sup> Gal. i. 2. &  
iv. 14.  
<sup>x</sup> ch. xiv. 22.  
& xv. 32, 41.

<sup>y</sup> 1 Cor. i. 12.  
& iii. 5, 6. &  
iv. 6. Tit. iii.  
13.

Jerusalem? Lewin supposes that this visit to Jerusalem was that mentioned in Gal. ii., when he went up by revelation—*i. e.*, by special Divine direction,—but scarcely any others agree with him. We are to remember that St. Paul's conversion did not make him the less a Jew. The Passover, Pentecost, and other feasts were national as well as religious commemorations to one who would consent to be even anathema on behalf of "his kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3). These feasts were now doubly endeared to him as a Christian who believed that God redeemed us at one of these festivals, and that the Holy Ghost came down at another.

Very probably he only continued at Ephesus till he could find a vessel to take him to Jerusalem. Most likely the feast was Pentecost, as before that navigation was considered dangerous.

22, 23. "And when he had landed at Cæsarea . . . strengthening all the disciples." Apparently he did not preach in Jerusalem, that being part of the field of labour of the Apostle of the circumcision; but he spent some time, no doubt, preaching and teaching at Antioch, this being his own peculiar sphere (xi. 25, 26), and then journeyed to Ephesus, taking the cities of Galatia and Phrygia on his way.

24. "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria . . . mighty in the scriptures." Apollos, a leading man amongst the Christians of the first age, is from this mention of him considered to belong to the Alexandrian school of Jewish thought—*i. e.*, that of Philo; and from some supposed connection between that thought

- 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and  
 • Rom. xii. 11. being <sup>a</sup> fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught  
 • ch. xix. 3. diligently the things of the Lord, <sup>a</sup> knowing only  
 the baptism of John.

25. "Things of the Lord." So H., P., most Cursives; but N., A., B., D., E., L., many Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Syriac, Arm., Æth., read, "the things of Jesus."

and the ideas contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to have been the author of that book. But all this is the merest conjecture. It is here only said that he was *born* at Alexandria; about his living or continuing there, and imbibing the spirit of the philosophy of the place, nothing whatsoever is said. What we read here is against it. He is said to have been rather of the school of the Baptist, and whilst accepting the mission of Jesus as the Messiah, to have known the truth but partially, for we read:—

25. "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord . . . knowing only the baptism," &c. What, then, was his Christian position or standing? Evidently this: he had received the Baptism of John, and through John's teaching was led to look upon Christ as the Lamb of God, and the Judge of all; but he had not yet accepted, because it had not been brought before him, the Baptism of Christ in all its consequences. He was yet external to the Church, for the Baptism of Christ alone admitted men into the Church as the body of Christ. He was instructed in the way of the Lord—*i. e.*, he knew very well (the original implies that he had been catechized in) the account of the Lord's Birth, Life, Teaching, Death, and Resurrection, as it was to be found in the original body of tradition; but he had not yet been face to face with the Pentecostal teaching—*i. e.*, in its leading features, the Sacramental or Church teaching. The Baptism of John, which was the initiation into his system, if such it could be called, must pass away with the fuller development of Christianity at Pentecost, chiefly in its Church aspect; but, as we shall see, there were many of the Jews of the dispersion who, through lack of opportunity, came short of this fuller manifestation of Christ. And amongst these was Apollos, and the twelve men whose case we have in the next chapter.

We shall do well to note that there cannot be a perfect Christianity without Sacramental Doctrine in its fulness. It is impossible to suppose that Apollos preached the mere example of Christ,

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, <sup>b</sup>helped them much which <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 8. had believed through grace:

26. "Aquila and Priscilla." So D., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Sah., Arm.; but N, A., B., E., Vulg., Cop., Æth., read, "Priscilla and Aquila."

and not His atoning Death; for John, Apollos' master, preached the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, but John himself directed men's minds to the fact that the difference between his system and that of our Lord was in the infinite superiority of the Lord's Baptism. "I baptize you with water; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost"—with the Holy Ghost as communicating to men the life and virtue of the Lord's Resurrection.

26. "And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue . . . more perfectly." On this Quesnel remarks: "Apollos, through the zeal of two married persons of the laity, is instructed more *perfectly* in the mysteries and science of Christianity, receives Baptism, and is presented to the Church. A man, therefore, may perform considerable services to it without being admitted into the sacred ministry. A solicitous concern for the interests of the Church, and a constant application to those things which promote the glory of God, are to be found in all states and conditions."

27. "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, . . . through grace." These letters were the letters of commendation (2 Corinth. iii. 1-3) which Christians, especially if they held any teaching office, carried with them from one church to another.

"Helped them much which had believed through grace." He was not the instrument of their conversion to the faith, but of their edification. This is exactly described in the words of the Apostle, "I have planted, Apollos watered" (*i. e.*, nourished and refreshed that which I planted), "but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 6).

28. "For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing," &c. We gather from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that the factious spirits in the church of Corinth endeavoured to

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus || was Christ.

<sup>c</sup> ch. ix. 22. & xvii. 3. & ver. 5.

|| Or, *is the Christ.*

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make Apollos a party leader (1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 4, 5; iv. 6). It is supposed, and with some reason, that when in xvi. 12 of the same epistle we read that "Apollos desired not to come at that time," it was because he would not visit a church where some would make him a tool of their factiousness. The last notice of him is in the epistle to Titus, where Titus, then in Crete, is desired to bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting to them (iii. 13).

## CHAP. XIX.

AND it came to pass, that, while <sup>a</sup> Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to <sup>b</sup> Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. i. 12. & iii. 5, 6.

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<sup>a</sup> "The upper coasts;" rather, "upper regions" or "borders," not "coasts" as near the sea.

1. "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, . . . certain disciples." Ephesus, the capital of Proconsular Asia, and the third city in the world for commerce and population (Rome being the first, and Alexandria the second), was situated at the mouth of the comparatively small river Cayster. It was founded by the Athenian, Androclus. It was, according to Strabo, the greatest commercial city west of the Taurus, possessing large docks which had been formed in the estuary of the Cayster soon after the time of Alexander the Great. It was long the most important city of the eastern part of the empire, not omitting Antioch itself, but began to decline when Constantinople, or new Rome, arose. It is now, according to all accounts, absolutely desolate, the greatest part of it morass, and the only inhabitants remaining being those of a small Turkish village. It was known far and wide for its magnificent temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the ancient world.

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, ° We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

<sup>°</sup> ch. viii. 16.  
See 1 Sam.  
iii. 7.

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

<sup>d</sup> ch. xviii.  
25.

2. "We have not so much as heard," &c. See below.

The reader will find a very full account of the province, of the city, and of its three principal buildings, the temple of Diana, the theatre, and the circus, with plans and engravings of the ruins, in Lewin's "Life of St. Paul," chap. xiii., pp. 312-330.

2, 3. "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? . . . unto John's baptism." Taking all this literally, the ignorance of these men seems incredible, and particularly so when we remember that the Baptist preached the Lord as baptizing with the Holy Ghost, in contrast to himself, who only baptized with water. Very probably the solution is to be found in a slight alteration in the translation. Instead of "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" it would be more accurately rendered, as by the Revisers, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" and instead of the answer, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," the Revisers have, "Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given." Translated very barely and literally, the clause may be rendered, "We did not so much as hear whether a Holy Spirit is." But it is impossible, on all principles of common sense, to translate this "is" (*ἔστιν*) as if it meant "exists," for the Old Testament is full from beginning to end of references to the Spirit of God; so that the "is" must be understood as meaning whether the Holy Ghost *is* given, or *is* in the Church, or *is* within our reach. Or, again, it is possible that by the Holy Spirit may be understood the Spirit as manifesting Himself in certain gifts or powers, such as tongues, prophecy, gifts of healing, &c. Such things seem, for a time at least, to have accompanied, as a rule, the laying on of hands on the baptized.

4. "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance." John's baptism being the baptism of repentance principally, and this repentance preparatory to men's receiving

4 Then said Paul, ° John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

\* Matt. iii. 11.  
John i. 15, 27,  
30. ch. i. 5.  
& xi. 16. &  
xiii. 24, 25.

† ch. viii. 16.

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

4. "On Christ Jesus." "Christ" omitted by N, A., B., E., Vulg., Copt.; but retained by H., L., P., most Cursives, Sah., Syriac, Arm., Æth.

remission of sins through the Death and Resurrection of Christ, must be imperfect, both in its power and significance. It could not be with power, till the Lord's Resurrection, by which the power of His Risen Life was diffused through the Church, and it could not signify death, burial, and resurrection with Christ, as St. Paul teaches in Rom. vi., or a grafting into His Body, and a putting on of Him, as in 1 Cor. xii. 13 and Gal. iii. 27—these things being in the future when John preached, could be but very dimly apprehended by the disciples of John, much less intimately connected with his baptism. How was it, then, that such men did not seek initiation into a better state after Pentecost? Because, probably, they never heard of the essential difference between the two baptisms. They were baptized by John. They knew that Christ had died and risen again, and so they believed on Him because of the testimony of John, but they lived far away from Jerusalem, and they took it for granted that the difference between one baptism and another was a very secondary matter, and it was only when Paul found them out, and questioned them, that they understood that they were not yet members of the Church.

5. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." St. Paul did not himself baptize them, for reasons which he gives in 1 Cor. i. 14, 15. St. Peter also did not himself baptize (Acts x. 48).

On the fact that they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, rather than that of the ever-blessed Trinity, see my notes on Acts ii. 38. It is not at all improbable that the formula of Matt. xxviii. was used, and yet the baptism said to be in the name of Jesus, or of the Lord Jesus.

6. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came," &c. Here we have the Apostle of the Gentiles asserting in the most practical manner possible "the doctrine of Baptisms



6 And when Paul had <sup>s</sup> laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and <sup>h</sup> they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

<sup>s</sup> ch. vi. 6. & viii. 17.

<sup>h</sup> ch. ii. 4. & x. 46.

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and of laying on of hands" (Heb. vi. 2). Instead of saying to these men, "All outward washings are of no consequence, provided your hearts are cleansed," he makes one baptism—that of the most eminent servant of God of all those who preceded Christ—to be of no avail, and insists upon their receiving another, the one by which he himself had been grafted into the Body of Christ's Church.

And instead of saying to them when they looked for the gift of the Holy Ghost, "Above all things rely on no outward ordinances, but pray earnestly, and read your Bibles, and attend the preaching of the Gospel," he himself lays his hands upon them to impart to them the Holy Spirit. What totally different conduct from what many of us would have expected from the Apostle! And yet it is strictly in accordance with his belief, his faith in the Lord Jesus. Believing that Jesus was the eternal Son of God, His own proper Son, Who was in the form of God, and in all Divine attributes equal with God, he naturally believed that such a Saviour would not ordain lifeless ordinances, little, if at all, better than the ceremonies they superseded. He consequently believed that the baptism of the servant, even though that servant be John, the Lord's precursor, must be effaced by the Baptism of the Divine Master, and that if the Master ordained any laying on of hands it must be for high and supernatural purposes; and believing that that Divine Master was now at the Right Hand of God, Head over all things to His Body, the Church, he believed that He would be with His Servants, so that their Baptisms and their Confirmations (and, of course, their Eucharists and their Absolutions, and Ordinations) should be His—means for conveying His Grace and advancing His Kingdom. So that St. Paul's action in the matter of the Baptism of these men was simply the outcome of his belief in the Lord's Divine Nature and omnipresent Power.

"They spake with tongues, and prophesied." The speaking with tongues could not be inarticulate sounds, expressing rapturous devotion, as some imagine; if so, they would not be called tongues. The "tongues" of Acts ii. were, all of them, living languages, and so must these have been, or they would have been no sign of Divine power.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

<sup>1</sup> ch. xvii. 2.  
& xviii. 4.

8 <sup>1</sup> And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things <sup>k</sup> concerning the kingdom of God.

<sup>k</sup> ch. i. 3. &  
xxviii. 28.

A. D. 57.  
<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. i. 15.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. ii. 2.  
Jude 10.

<sup>m</sup> See ch. ix.  
2. & xxii. 4. &  
xxiv. 14. ver.  
23.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil <sup>m</sup> of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

<sup>n</sup> See ch. xx.  
31.

10 And <sup>n</sup> this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

9. "Of one Tyrannus." "One" (ἓν); so D., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Arm.; but N., A., B., 13, 27, 29, 81, Sah., Copt., Syriac, omit "one."

10. "The word of the Lord Jesus." "Jesus" omitted by N., A., B., D., E., fifteen Cursives, Vulg., Syriac; but retained by H., L., P., and most Cursives.

8, 9. "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly," &c. Notice, the subject of his preaching was not only Christ crucified and risen, but the things concerning the Kingdom of God, *i. e.*, its organization, its bonds of union, its watchwords and laws—above all, the inherence of the whole of it in Christ its Head.

9. "But when divers were hardened, and believed not" (or obeyed not). Such is ever the effect of the Gospel to some: to those who receive it, it is a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death. For those who reject it, cannot reject it as they can reject any mere natural truth or human opinion. In rejecting it, they refuse God's offers of mercy.

"He separated the disciples." He separated them from the unbelieving Jews—not, of course, from any of their Christian brethren, only from those who blasphemed the All-Holy Name.

"Disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus." This was probably a lecture-room let out for hire. It was not a church or place of Christian assembly, but a room open to all comers.

10. "And this continued by the space of two years . . . both Jews and Greeks." This with the three months before mentioned

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

° Mark xvi. 20.  
ch. xiv. 3.  
p ch. v. 15.  
See 2 Kings  
iv. 29.

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

13 ¶ ° Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, ° took upon them to call over them which

A.D. 58.  
¶ Matt. xii. 27.  
° See Mark ix.  
38. Luke ix.  
49.

was probably the longest uninterrupted season of ministry which Paul enjoyed in any place. And the most important; for during this time he founded the Churches of Colosse, Laodicea, and others; in fact, all they of Proconsular Asia, one of the most populous and flourishing districts of the Empire, had the opportunity of hearing the Gospel.

11, 12. "And God wrought special miracles . . . evil spirits went out of them." Special, *i.e.*, extraordinary, out of the common way, even for miracles, and indeed they were: they are only equalled by the healing wrought by the touching of the hem of the Lord's garment, and by the shadow of Peter as he passed by restoring to health the sick persons upon whom it fell. Such extraordinary puttings forth of power are only in accordance with the Lord's assurance in John xiv. 12: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father."

It may be asked, Why were these special miracles wrought here and nowhere else, apparently? Very probably because of the pretensions to miracles by magic which were so rife in the city. God thus showed them that the supernatural acts which they pretended to do by incantations, He could do and He did by pieces of cloth which had merely touched the body of His servant. The words "handkerchiefs" (*σουδάρια*), or "aprons" (*σιμικινθία*), are both Latin words; the first originally meaning a cloth by which the sweat is wiped off, the other a wrap half girding the body as an apron would do. Notice that these were not parts of his dress, but things which had simply touched his body.

13. "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists." This seems to follow upon the last statement. The professed exorcists, seeing the power with which God invested the cloth which had but

had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

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

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

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13. "We adjure you." So H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Sah.; but N., A., B., D., E., 13, 25, 33, 35, 40, 73, Vulg., Copt., Arm., read, "I adjure."

touched the person of the Apostle, thought that they too could use with impunity the All-Holy Name.

"The vagabond Jews." This word had not the evil significance which it now has; the Revisers render it "strolling" Jews. From the warnings against unlawful arts all through the Old Testament it would seem that, notwithstanding the clearer revelation of God which they possessed, they were always addicted to these evil practices. And the Ephesians seem to have cultivated these arts more than any other Greeks.<sup>1</sup>

14. "And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so." It is difficult to understand how a man who could occupy the position of a Jewish chief priest, or head of one of the twenty-four courses, however wicked in other respects he might be, could have sanctioned such an employment. I think the probability is that, though born a Jew, he had become an apostate, and was the head of some college of heathen priests. Mr. Blunt writes, "Chief of the priests." This office appears to be the same as that which is called, "High priest of the Ephesians" (*Ἐφεσίων* ARXIEREUS), on a coin dating from about B.C. 43-33, when it was held by one named Glaucon. The coin is engraved in Morell's "Thesaurus."

The readings of this verse are various.

15. "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know," &c. The words for "know" in the two clauses are

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<sup>1</sup> Judea and Ephesus, or Proconsular Asia, seem to have excelled in Magic and Exorcism all the rest of the world, and these are the very two places where, apparently, demoniacal possession was most frequent. May not this be accounted for in this way? Assuming that the existence of evil spirits is a reality, those who cultivated intercourse with such evil beings would be more than others given over by God into their power: so that those whom by their incantations they thought to make their slaves, were permitted to become their masters.

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

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

<sup>a</sup> Luke i. 65.  
& vii. 16. ch.  
ii. 43. & v. 5,  
11.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. iii. 8.

16. "Overcame them." So H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac; but N, A., B., D., about fifteen Cursives, Vulg., Copt., Arm., read, "Overcame them both," as if there were two.

different. "Jesus I acknowledge or recognize, and Paul I know or am acquainted with." The first "I know" (*γινώσκω*) seems to mean, "I recognize and own His power;" and the second (*ἰσχυραμαι*) expresses a knowledge of a lower degree, like our word "acquainted with." So Bishop Wordsworth.

16. "And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame," &c. He seems, like the demoniac of Gadara, to have had preternatural strength from the spirit dwelling in him.

"Overcame them." Very many important MSS. read "overcame them both;" so from this we should gather that only two of the seven were present to exorcise.

"So that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

17. "And this was known . . . name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." They recognized at once that the All-Holy Name, the Name which is above every name, was not like the mere word or letters of an incantation, but the Name of One Who would avenge such insults offered to It, as that It should be used as a magical formula, tentatively, and for gain. If pronounced at all, It must be pronounced in faith, with awe and reverence, and for the one purpose of setting forth the glory of Him Whose Name It is.

Are we not now much too familiar in our use of this Name?

18. "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds." It has been supposed that these were baptized Christians who had not wholly given up their evil arts, but practised them in secret. It seems more probable, however, that these were neophytes who had believed the Apostolic preaching, and made this confession anterior to their baptism.

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

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It has also been debated whether this confession was a public or a private one. If the confession was in a measure general, and specified sins, such as the practice of magic, without entering into details, it was very probably in public; but if they thoroughly unburdened their consciences by confessing any particulars which added to the guilt of their sins, it must have been in private; otherwise their confession would have been a means of polluting the hearts of others.

19. "Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together," &c. The word "curious" properly signifies over-busy or meddling, and, it seems, came to be applied to magical arts, as meddling with, and prying into, things above the sphere of human knowledge. Thus the accusers of Socrates said: "Socrates does wrong, and is over-curious (*περιεργάζεται*) by searching what is under the earth, and what is in heaven." Lewin writes: "In no city upon the face of the globe at that day was sorcery so much practised as at Ephesus. The incantations used there had acquired a high degree of celebrity. The black art was there exercised, not merely by the strolling vagabond for extracting a few pence from the credulity of silly women and illiterate artisans, but, like astrology in more recent times, was in the hands of the polite, and was studied as a science by philosophers and men of letters."<sup>1</sup>

"Fifty thousand pieces of silver." If this was the Attic Drachma, it would be about 8½*d.* of our money, and the value of the books destroyed would be £1,770; but in real value—*i. e.*, in purchasing power—it would be far greater.

20. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." The

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<sup>1</sup> The far-famed Ephesian letters were copies of the mystic words engraved on the image of the Ephesian Artemis. They are thus described by Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* v. ch. 8: "Androcydes the Pythagorean says the far-famed so-called Ephesian letters were of the class of symbols. For he said that *ἀσκιον* (shadowless) meant darkness, for it has no shadow; and *κατάσκιον* (shadowy) light, since it casts with its rays the shadow; and *ἡὶ* is the earth, according to an ancient appellation; and *τετράς* is the year, in reference to the (four) seasons; and *δαμναμίας ἑὺς* is the sun which overpowers (*δαμνάων*); and *τὰ ἀΐσα* is the true voice."

20 "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

21 ¶ "After these things were ended, Paul  
 7 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.

<sup>u</sup> ch. vi. 7. &  
 xii. 24.  
 A. D. 59.  
<sup>x</sup> Rom. xv. 25.  
 Gal. ii. 1.  
<sup>y</sup> ch. xx. 22.  
<sup>z</sup> ch. xviii. 21.  
 & xxiii. 11.  
 Rom. xv. 24  
 —23.  
<sup>a</sup> ch. xiii. 5.

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of "them

power of the Word was shown in their deliverance from the most deeply-rooted sin of the place—a fascinating sin, as having for its subject-matter intercourse with spiritual beings—and apparently a lucrative one. They did not sell the books, or put them aside as having no more use for them, but destroyed them, the mere possession being sinful.

21. "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit." "In the spirit" no doubt means under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Since every man's purposes are conceived first of all in his soul or spirit, there would be no necessity for mentioning the spirit, if the resolve or purpose was one of the sort commonly springing out of the mere human spirit.

"When he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia." For the purpose, that is, of seeing to the welfare of the churches planted by him in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Cenchrea.

"To go to Jerusalem." Bearing the offerings of the Gentile saints for the relief of their brethren in Jerusalem.

"I must also see Rome." "See Rome." Not the palaces, the theatres, the amphitheatres, the baths, the temples, but a few assemblies, all small in number, meeting in this house or that catacomb in the name of Jesus Christ. This was the attraction which drew him to the imperial city.

22. "So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus," &c. Timotheus has been mentioned before, but this is the first notice of Erastus. Nothing is known of him except that St. Paul sends a salutation from him to the Roman Christians (Rom. xvi. 23), where he is called the chamberlain, or, perhaps, steward of the city; and, if so, he must have been a person of consideration, in position much above the ordinary run of converts.

that ministered unto him, Timotheus and <sup>b</sup> Erastus; but he

himself stayed in Asia for a season.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. xvi. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. iv. 20.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. i. 8.

<sup>d</sup> See ch. ix. 2.

23 And <sup>e</sup> the same time there arose no small stir about <sup>d</sup> that way.

24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana,

brought <sup>e</sup> no small gain unto the craftsmen;

<sup>e</sup> ch. xvi. 16, 19.

25 Whom he called together with the work-

“Two of them that ministered unto him.” This ministering cannot here be ministering to his daily wants as servants, but ministering to him in the Gospel; assisting him in such ways as preaching, baptizing, celebrating the Eucharist, carrying messages to different churches, receiving accounts of how distant churches were progressing spiritually, and such things. Paul had many of such ministers or attendants. Seven are mentioned in ch. xx. ver. 4. They might be designated “vicars apostolic.” Through them he exercised personal oversight over all the churches which he had planted.

23. “And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.” “The same time.” Lewin supposes that this time was probably in the month Artemisius, sacred to Diana (answering to parts of our March and April), in which a vast concourse from all parts of the province came to see the games and other pageants celebrated in honour of the goddess, and which was also the time of the great annual market.

24. “For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana . . . craftsmen.” These were small models of the *naos*, or more sacred part (chancel) of the temple containing the image of the goddess. They were portable, and some so small that they could be carried about the person as amulets. Medallions of Ephesus are still to be seen in the cabinets of collectors, representing the *πρόναος* and statue of the Ephesian Artemis.

25, 26. “Whom he called together with the workmen . . . made with hands.” These words of Demetrius are an honest, outspoken declaration of the fact, that, if Christianity progressed as it was then doing, not only would the ancient religion decline and vanish away, but a large number of persons who made their livelihood by



men of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that 'they be no gods, which are made with hands:

f Ps. cxv. 4.  
Is. xlv. 10—  
20. Jer. x. 3.

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set

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ministering to it in various ways, would be ruined. These would be not only such craftsmen as Demetrius, but the priests who were partakers of the altar, and so lived on the sacrifices, and there would be the sculptors, and carvers in wood, and workers in metal, for it would be centuries before Christianity would be able to enlist high art on her side, and indeed to this day it has not done so in the East. In fact, the material interests arrayed against the Church were so various and so powerful, that no miracle on the side of Christianity was so astonishing as its progress in spite of such interested opposition.

26. "Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout," &c. Is this the exaggeration of fear, or was it the simple fact that the Gospel had made such progress that the profits of the trades depending upon idolatrous worship were diminishing seriously? Very probably the latter, for Pliny, the governor of the neighbouring province of Bithynia, in sending an account of the state of religious worship in the province, speaks of the temples becoming deserted, and no offerings brought to the shrines of the gods. (See Excursus iii.)

"Saying, that they be no gods, which are made with hands." It did not seem to strike him that if anything whatsoever be made with hands, it must of necessity be inferior to him that made it, for the maker must have determined upon its existence, and devised its shape and features, and set it up in its place. This shows us that whatever may be the opinion of the educated respecting the image being only a representation, the vast mass of men look upon it as rather the Deity itself, or at least, as inhabited by the Deity.

27. "So that not only this our craft is in danger . . . all Asia and the world worshippeth." Notice how the danger to the craft is put before the danger that the temple and the majesty of the goddess should be despised. Very likely he believed in no goddess

at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

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

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and

27. "And her magnificence should be destroyed." So H., L., P., most Cursives; but N., A., B., E., some Cursives, &c., read, "She should be deposed from her magnificence."

29. "Whole city." N., A., B., Vulg., &c., omit "whole," but E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Sah., Syriac, Æth., retain it.

or god whatsoever, and laughed in his sleeve at the credulity of the dupes who bought his silver shrines.

"The temple of the great goddess Diana" (or Artemis). In order not to interrupt the thread of these practical notes, I shall give at the end of this chapter a graphic and learned account from Lewin's "Life of St. Paul" of this great wonder of the ancient world.

"Whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." Bishop Wordsworth quotes a passage from Apuleius speaking of the worship of the Ephesian goddess as co-extensive with the world: "Diana Ephesia, cujus nomen unicum multiformi specie ritu vario nomine multijugo totus veneratur orbis."

28. "And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath . . . Diana of the Ephesians." With wrath, *i.e.*, at the threatened extinction of their profitable trade.

"Great is Diana of the Ephesians." This has been supposed to be the chorus at the great festivals of the goddess, which they all shouted with one accord; the sentence seems as if it were familiar to them.

29. "And the whole city was filled with confusion . . . they rushed with one accord," &c. No doubt they made for the house of Aquila, with whom Paul was lodging. They missed their prey: but as St. Paul tells us that Aquila and Priscilla had for his life laid down their necks (Rom. xvi. 4), it is likely that these faithful friends in shielding the Apostle brought themselves into the most imminent peril. The mob, however, seized on Gaius (or Caius) and Aristarchus, two of those in constant attendance on the Apostle, and dragged them away as criminals. Caius bore one of the most common of Roman names. He seems to have been a

having caught 'Gaius and \* Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

f Rom. xvi. 23.  
1 Cor. i. 14.  
g ch. xx. 4. &  
xxvii. 2. Col.  
iv. 10. Philem.  
24.

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

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

different person from Gaius of Derbe, in Lycaonia. Some have supposed that he survived till the residence of St. John in Ephesus, and was the person to whom he addressed his third Epistle.

Aristarchus is mentioned as being a companion of St. Paul in Acts xx. 4 and xxvii. 2. He was a fellow-prisoner of St. Paul when he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 10).

"Into the theatre." Said to have been the largest structure of the kind ever erected by the Greeks, and capable of containing some 50,000 spectators. A small view of the site and present remains of the building is given in Lewin, p. 328. Of course such a building would be used for popular assemblies, as ours are used.

30. "And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples," &c. They knew that he would be helpless in restraining the passions of such a multitude, and would only expose himself and the whole body of the disciples to greater danger.

31. "And certain of the chief of Asia [Asiarchs] which were his friends," &c. These were not merely persons of rank and consideration, but the title was an official one. The Asiarchs were thirteen (some say ten), deputed by the thirteen cities of Proconsular Asia: they had to celebrate the public games at their own expense, and were necessarily men of the most ample fortune. Dean Plumptre has a note on the fact of some of these high officials being friends of St. Paul, which deserves notice: "There is something significant in the fact that the Asiarchs were St. Paul's friends. The manliness, tact, and courtesy, which tempered his zeal and boldness, seem always to have gained for him the respect of men in authority: Sergius Paulus (xiii. 7), Gallio (xviii. 14, 17), Lysias (xxiii.), Festus and Agrippa (xxv. 9, xxvi. 28, 32); the centurion Julius (xxvii. 3, 43)." Howson notices that not many years after this

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

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And <sup>h</sup> Alexander <sup>h</sup> beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

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

35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he

uproar in the Ephesian theatre, another Asiarch, Philip, "being asked at Smyrna to let loose a lion on Polycarp, refused to do so."

"Desiring him that he would not adventure himself." This, of course, owing to the official position of the Asiarchs, would be authoritative.

32. "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly," &c. Many expositors have noticed that this description of the riot must have been from an eye-witness, it is so exceedingly true to nature. It is true of an immense assemblage of many thousand people; but it is not so true of a smaller concourse, every man of whom might know well the purpose of the ringleaders.

33. "And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward," &c. This Alexander may have been Alexander the coppersmith of 2 Tim. iv. 14. He was, no doubt, put forward by the Jews to exculpate themselves as being opponents of Paul, and in no way answerable for his teaching; but, if so, it was wholly without the desired effect, for as soon as he made endeavours to address the multitude, we read,

34. "But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space," &c. They probably recognized his Jewish features, and knew that he was bound by his creed to oppose the worship of Artemis, quite as much as Paul was; and so for two hours they drowned any attempt on his part to make himself heard by the vociferation of their former cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

35. "And when the townclerk [grammateus] had appeased the people, he said," &c. "The townclerk," rather, perhaps, the

said, *Ye* men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is † a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter ?

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are

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35. "A worshipper." Rather, "temple-sweeper." See below.

recorder, the keeper of the archives of the city, no doubt exercising judicial functions, as similar officers amongst ourselves do. In the pageants, in which certain of the leading divinities, as Jupiter, Mercury, and Apollo, were personified, there was also a grammateus who was the mock Apollo; but the functionary mentioned here must have been a graver personage, exercising real authority.

"What man is there that knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper," &c. The word translated "worshipper" is a singular one. It means temple-sweeper or sacristan, and was claimed by the Ephesians as a most honourable title, as showing their humility in the presence of the goddess, and their care for the preservation and adornment of her magnificent fane, the pride of their city. Their conduct in the matter of their temple stands in singular contrast with that of some of those amongst ourselves who have inherited the care of our glorious cathedrals. I remember houses built against one of them, blocking up parts of its windows. In another there was a right of way, and a public foot-path across the nave where it adjoined the chancel.

"And of the image which fell down from Jupiter." The many-breasted image was so rude, so fetish-like, that its origin was relegated to pre-historic times; and like that of Minerva at Athens and several others, it was supposed by the vulgar to have fallen from the sky.

36. "Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against." This sounds in our ears as if it were said ironically; but certainly in Ephesus it would have been unsafe to contravene these venerable traditions.

37. "For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches," &c.—more properly, despoilers of temples. We now apply the term church only to Christian buildings.

neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

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

39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a || lawful assembly.

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37. "Your goddess." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Copt.; but N, A., B., D., some Cursives, Syriac, Sah., Arm., read, "our."

38. "Concerning other matters." So A., D., H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, &c.; but B. and a few Cursives render "further."

"Nor yet blasphemers of your [our] goddess." This witnesses to the sober and dignified way in which the great Apostle would speak against the popular worship. He would not rail against it, but simply show its incompatibility with any true and worthy idea of the Deity.

38. "Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him . . . the law is open." "The law is open"—rather, perhaps, the court days are kept, or come round—*i. e.*, he will not have long to wait for justice to be done to him.

"And there are deputies," literally, proconsuls. It has been made a difficulty that St. Luke speaks in the plural; and he is supposed to speak in a general way—there are proconsuls, one succeeding another. But it is not at all improbable that he was perfectly correct, for "in A. D. 54, when Paul arrived at Ephesus, Junius Silanus was proconsul; but he was poisoned at the instance of Agrippina, the mother of Nero, by Publius Celer, a Roman knight, and Helius, an imperial freedman, the two procurators of Asia (Tac. Ann. xiii. 1); and it would seem that the reward for their villany was the joint proconsulship" (Lewin, p. 412).

39. "But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined," &c. The present concourse was illegal, not having been summoned in due form—in fact, a mere mob. All lawful assemblies of the people require due notice beforehand, that all interested may be present if they desire.

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

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

40. "For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar." The Roman authorities were naturally exceedingly jealous of popular risings in such places as Ephesus, and would very promptly call on the town clerk or recorder to give some explanation of what had "thrown the whole city into confusion." The truth of the matter, if reported at head-quarters, would seem so insignificant in the way of accounting for such a concourse that it would not be accepted for a moment.

41. "And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly." The mere mention of the Roman power, bringing to mind what short work it would make of their lives and liberties, was sufficient, and the assembly quietly dispersed.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS OR DIANA AT EPHEBUS, FROM LEWIN.

"The temple, one of the wonders of the world, and which was 220 years in building, and erected at the joint cost of all Asia, stood without the walls, at some little distance to the north-east, and being constructed of the purest marble, is said to have gleamed like a meteor to the gaze of the approaching mariner. It was built upon marshy ground, and the foundations were laid at a vast expense. The first superstructure, or basement, was ascended by a grand flight of 14 steps, and upon this platform was erected the temple, facing the east, 425 feet long and 220 broad, and supported by columns of Parian marble sixty feet high, of which 36 were beautifully carved, and one by the hand of the famous Scopas. The building was of the Ionic order, and an octostyle dipteros—that is, the portico in front *in pronaos*, and at the back *in postico*, consisted each of thirty-two columns, eight abreast and four deep, and round the sides were two rows of columns.

"It was the custom with the ancients to place at the entrance of the temples a *περὶ ἀντήρων*, or lavatory, that the worshippers might first purify themselves, and such a lavatory appears to have stood in front of the temple of Diana.

"Let us now survey the interior of the temple. We mount the outer steps, and, standing under the portico, look on the massive doors framed of carved cypress. On each side are the jambs of marble, and at the top is the enormous transom, a single block of such vast dimensions that the beholder marvels at the mechanical skill that could have raised it. The legend runs that the architect despaired of the undertaking, but that whilst he slept the Goddess herself came to the rescue, and in the morning the ponderous stone was found adjusted to its place. We pass the doorway and find ourselves in a court or hall, in which are the most famous pieces of sculpture from the hands of Praxiteles and Scopas and the most eminent artists. There stands, radiant with gold, the figure of

Artemidorus, who was thus highly honoured for having successfully advocated at Rome the cause of the temple against the imperial revenue officers, who had sacrilegiously appropriated to the exchequer the fisheries of the Selinusian lakes, which formed part of the sacred possessions. There is a group of Amazons, one by Polyclethus, another by Phidias, another by Ctesilaus, another by Cydon, and another by Phradmon; but the work of Polyclethus is the finest, excelling even that of Phidias.

"Here also is the gallery of paintings, and nobler specimens of the art are not to be found in the world. There hangs the masterpiece of Calliphon the Samian—Patroclus preparing for battle, with attendant damsels buckling on him the armour of Achilles. There may be seen the chef-d'œuvre of Apelles, the prince of painters—Alexander the Great grasping a thunderbolt. This grand work cost the temple twenty talents of gold, or £7,000, estimated by Chandler to be equivalent to £38,650 at the present day.

"In the centre of the court or hall is the *vaûç*, or shrine, containing the image of the Goddess. We enter, and the roof, which is of cedar, is supported by a row on each side of four columns of green jasper. [These eight columns were afterwards transported to Constantinople, and may now be seen in the mosque of St. Sophia.] Against the walls hang the votive offerings of the worshippers of the goddess: some the gorgeous presents of kings and princes, and one the humble psalter of Alexander the musician of Cythera. In front of us is the altar rich with the carvings of Praxiteles, and beyond it hangs from the ceiling the purple embroidered veil screening the image that all the world worshippeth. The veil is raised, and we look on the Goddess herself. Can this be Diana, the great Goddess of the Ephesians, a wooden image so timeworn, that whether the material be vine or cedar or ebony, the nearest examination cannot discover? In either hand is a staff or trident, and the body is covered with paps, the emblem of prolificness. Mutianus was profane enough to say that the image was the work of Pandemon, but the air of antiquity about it carries us back to a period long anterior to the records of written history. Whence it came or by whom it was shaped is a mystery, but the common belief is that it fell from heaven.

"At the back of the *vaûç* is an apartment which we may not enter; it is the repository where nations and potentates have stored their most valuable treasures, for such is the sanctity of the temple that no safer bank can be found in Asia, or even in the world."—(Lewin, vol. i., pp. 323-326.)

## CHAP. XX.

AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and <sup>a</sup> departed for <sup>1</sup> to go into Macedonia.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 5.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. i. 3.

ANNO  
DOMINI  
60.

1. "And embraced them." So H., L., P., most Cursives; but A., B., some Cursives, and very nearly M, D., and E., read, "And exhorted them and took leave of them."

1. "And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples," &c. St. Paul did not leave altogether because of the tumult, for it is said in verse 21 of the former chapter, "that he



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

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purposed in the spirit, after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem." He had determined to take a circuit to Jerusalem, through the scenes of his former labours; but we gather from scattered notices in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians that the route he took was greatly influenced by the accounts he received, or expected to receive, of the state of the Corinthian Church.

2. "And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation," &c. It will be needful to gather up from certain allusions in the Epistles to the Corinthians what took place on this journey. It had been determined upon, as we have seen, whilst he was in Ephesus; and in the First Epistle to the Corinthians we read again of this determination: "Now I will come unto you when I shall have passed through Macedonia, for I do [that is, it is my purpose to] pass through Macedonia. . . . But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost" (xvi. 5).

In order, then, to carry out this intention, he journeyed by land to Troas, with the intention of crossing over to Macedonia. At Troas he expected to find Titus, whom he had sent as his special messenger to the Corinthian Church to repress their disorders, and particularly to see and bring him word as to their obeying his word respecting the excommunication of the incestuous person. If he could have been assured that the Corinthian Church would have promptly and willingly obeyed him in this matter, he would have taken them on his way to Macedonia, as he says, in 2 Corinth. i. 15: "In this confidence I was minded to come to you before, that ye might have a second benefit; and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia to you, and of you to be brought," &c.

But such were his misgivings respecting their obedience that he sent Titus to see as to their mind towards him, and whether they had separated the offending member from their company. But on arriving at Troas, at which place he had appointed Titus to meet him, he was in the utmost anxiety. "I had no rest in my spirit," he writes (ii. 13), "because I found not Titus my brother; but, taking leave of them, I went from thence to Macedonia." This anxiety was

3 And *there* abode three months. And <sup>b</sup>when the Jews  
b ch. ix. 23.  
 & xxiii. 12. &  
 xxv. 3. 2 Cor.  
 xi. 26. laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into  
 Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

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set at rest, this sorrow was turned into joy, in some city in Macedonia in which he met Titus, and received from him the accounts of the deep sorrow of the Corinthian Christians, and their readiness to obey his admonition respecting the offender. "When we were come into Macedonia," he writes, "our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus. And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me, so that I rejoiced the more" (2 Corinth. vii. 5-7).

Freed from anxiety respecting the spiritual state of this most important church, St. Paul resumed his missionary work, having sent through Titus his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. This was, no doubt, the time when he journeyed beyond the bounds of Macedonia to the north-west, even to Illyricum; for in the Epistle to the Romans, written from Corinth, he says "that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ" (Rom. xv. 19).

Such is the journey described so very briefly in part of one verse of the history. If we had not had the two Epistles, we should never have supposed that it contained so many touching incidents. This shows us how exceedingly fragmentary is the history in the New Testament, which remark applies to the Gospels as well as to the Acts, so that we never can conclude from the omission of the account of any presumed fact that it did not take place. We never can say, "If such a thing had occurred it would certainly have been mentioned."

"He came unto Greece." The word is not Achaia—the word generally used for all Greece south of Macedonia,—but Hellas, an older word.

3. "And there abode three months." Principally, if not altogether, at Corinth, from which place he wrote the Epistle to the Romans.

"And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail

4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, ° Aristarchus and Secundus; and ° Gaius of Derbe, and ° Timotheus; and of Asia, ° Tychicus and ° Trophimus.

5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

° ch. xix. 29.  
 & xxvii. 2.  
 Col. iv. 10.  
 d ch. xix. 29.  
 ° ch. xvi. 1.  
 f Eph. vi. 21.  
 Col. iv. 7.  
 2 Tim. iv. 12.  
 Titus iii. 12.  
 ° ch. xxi. 29.  
 2 Tim. iv. 20.

4. "Into Asia." So A., D., E., H., L., P., almost all Cursives, Syriac, Arm.; but N, B., Vulg., Sah., Copt., Æth., omit "Into Asia."

"Sopater." N, A., B., D., E., many Cursives, Vulg., Copt., read, "son of Pyrrhus." H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, &c., omit.

into Syria." They very probably organized a plot to murder him at the port of Cenchrea, when he was about to embark; but having heard of their intention, he crossed the isthmus, or took a vessel bound for some port in Macedonia.

4. "And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea," &c. Many ancient MSS. read Sopater, son of Pyrrhus; the name of his father may have been inserted to distinguish him from the Sosipater of Romans xvi. 21.

"And of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus." Aristarchus is mentioned as a companion of Paul, who in the tumult at Ephesus was in danger of his life (xix. 29). Very probably he accompanied him to Rome. Of Secundus nothing more is said. Gaius, or Caius, was not the person who was apprehended with Aristarchus at the riot in Ephesus. Tychicus is mentioned with honour in Ephes. vi. 21, and Coloss. iv. 7, as a "beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord." Trophimus, by accompanying Paul into the temple, was the innocent cause of the disturbance which led to Paul's imprisonment in Rome (xxi. 29). It may be asked, Why did these seven men accompany Paul? No doubt as his ecclesiastical ministers—one might say, his vicars or archdeacons. We have besides these the names of nearly twenty who more or less accompanied him, that he might through them oversee the churches which he had planted and send messages to them, or make them the bearers of epistles. St. Paul always kept the churches which he had planted under his own Apostolic rule, and these men were the instruments through which he exercised it.

5. "These going before tarried for us at Troas." The reader will notice the resumption of the first person plural, "we;" no

6 And we sailed away from Philippi after <sup>h</sup> the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them <sup>l</sup> to Troas in five days ; where we abode seven days.

<sup>h</sup> Ex. xii. 14, 15. & xxiii. 15.

<sup>i</sup> ch. xvi. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Cor. ii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. iv. 13.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

Rev. i. 10.

<sup>l</sup> ch. ii. 42, 46.

1 Cor. x. 16.

& xi. 20, &c.

7 And upon <sup>k</sup> the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together <sup>l</sup> to break bread, Paul

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7. "The disciples came together." So H., L., P., and the greater part of the Cursives; but N., A., B., D., E., about twenty Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Arm., Æth., read, "we came together."

doubt St. Luke having been left at Philippi (ch. xvi. 17), rejoined here the Apostle and his company.

Why, however, did these seven "go before"? Probably for this reason: Paul determined to keep the Passover at Philippi, and the presence of these his companions, being all of them (except Timothy) converted and uncircumcised Gentiles, would have been a scandal to his fellow Jews.

6. "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread." Why did Paul keep the days of unleavened bread, *i.e.*, the Passover? Because his Christianity did not make him the less a Jew. The Passover had for him twofold memories of grace. There was the grace, or loving-kindness of God, in the redemption of his ancestors from Egyptian bondage, and there was the grace of God in the Redemption wrought by His only Begotten Son at the same sacred season. This latter would be in his eyes infinitely the greater of the two, but though the new transcended, far transcended, the old redemption, it would not in the eyes of such an Israelite as St. Paul, efface it: and besides this, one who could write, "To the Jews became I as a Jew that I might gain the Jews," would never think of needlessly offending them by neglecting or despising their most sacred feast.

"To Troas in five days." The voyage could be accomplished in much less time, but, no doubt, at this season the winds were less favourable, or other circumstances, unknown to us, may have lengthened the time.

7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples [or we] came together," &c. This is the first instance of the mention of the first day, *i.e.*, Sunday, as the day for the weekly celebration of the Eucharist.

It is a matter of difficulty, however, to determine whether this

preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

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celebration at Troas took place on the Saturday evening, *i. e.*, after the termination of the Jewish Sabbath at six p.m. on the Saturday, or on the evening of the first day, on Sunday itself. Anyhow, it was on the Lord's day, at whatever hour that day began, that the custom was observed, and within less than a century after this, we have the testimony of a writer of the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr (Apol. i. 67), to the universal prevalence of it. The passage is so valuable and interesting, that I will transcribe it: "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities and in the country, gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles (*i. e.*, the Gospels), and the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits: then when the reading has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread, and wine, and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers up prayer and thanksgiving, according to his ability,<sup>1</sup> and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given (*i. e.*, of the consecrated elements), and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons." . . . "But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter (*ἕλη*), made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday), and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His Apostles and disciples, He taught them then things which have been submitted to you for your consideration."

"And continued his speech until midnight." This seems to imply that his discourse was unusually long, and that the celebration of the Eucharist was deferred considerably.

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<sup>1</sup> "Ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ. There has been much difference of opinion upon the meaning of these words, "according to his ability," or according to the power or force which belongs to him. I have no doubt that Grabe is right, who sees in it a reference to a very ancient Eucharistic prayer in the Apostolical Constitutions: "We give thanks to the Almighty Father, not as we ought, but as we are able." *Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, Θεὲ πατοκράτορ, οὐχ ὅσοι δεόμεθα, ἀλλ' ὅσον δύναμα?*

8 And there were many lights <sup>m</sup> in the upper chamber, <sup>m</sup> ch. i. 13. where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutyclus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

8. "Where *they* were gathered together." N, A., B., D., E., H., L., P., most Curatives, Vulg., Syriac, &c., read, "where *we* were gathered together."

8. "And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together." Many suppose that these lights were festive, since in all religions which encouraged men to worship God under roofs, in temples, or rooms, lights have been freely used. Dean Plumptre ingeniously suggests that the calumny alluded to by Tertullian, that in the Christian assemblies the lights were extinguished, and foul deeds of darkness committed, had already begun to operate, and that this abundance of lamps was used to assure those without, that though Christians were forced to meet at night, they yet conducted themselves as under the broad light of day.

The particular mention of these lamps is more difficult to account for. The most likely supposition is that their glare, and the heat occasioned by them, brought on the sleep of Eutyclus.

9. "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutyclus," &c. They were assembled on the third floor. The windows round the apartment were not of glass, but were shutters or doors, which could be shut to keep out the weather. The room being heated, this young man was seated at the open window. Being overcome with sleep, he fell backward and dropped into the street outside, no doubt head-foremost. As he fell probably some thirty or forty feet, and there was nothing to break his fall, he was naturally taken up dead.

This must be held to, or the miracle ceases to be one, and becomes only a case of suspended animation.

10. "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said," &c. Was he then really dead? Yes, assuredly, but when Paul brought his own body into contact with the body of the dead man, then God began to restore life. The heart began to beat, and

10 And Paul went down, and <sup>n</sup> fell on him, and embracing *him* said, °Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Kings xvii.  
21. 2 Kings iv.  
34.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and

<sup>o</sup> Matt. ix. 24.

the breathing to return, and then Paul exclaimed, "Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him."

One expositor says that the life had not yet ebbed away, but that it was fast doing so, and no mere human power could have arrested it. But how do we know this? Why should we assert a miracle which involves arrest of inevitable death, in a man utterly unconscious, to avoid confessing an absolute restoration to life? The one is a clear, unmistakable putting forth of God's power, "God, Who raiseth the dead." The other *may* not be a restoration to life, but a natural recovery of the most unlikely character. For on all natural principles we must account him to have been killed by such a fall, for he fell backwards out of the window of a three-storied house. The fall was occasioned by the heavier parts of his body, the head, shoulders, and chest overbalancing the lighter, so that he must have descended head-foremost, and the concussion, unless by special miracle, must have killed him: so that unless we entirely reject the possibility of a restoration to life, we must account it to have been one.

11. "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten," &c. Having restored life to the dead man, Paul re-ascended the stairs to the upper room, and celebrated the Eucharist, for he broke bread (*τὸν ἄρτον*, the bread), which is the normal description of a celebration (1 Cor. x. 16).

"And eaten." Literally, had tasted. At first sight we should have thought that this referred to the partaking of the Eucharistic morsel, but Bishop Wordsworth gives reasons in a note on Acts x. 10, for supposing that this meant partaking of a repast apart from the Eucharist. Blunt says: "It is doubtful whether it refers to Communion, or to the taking of food in the love feast, which may have followed."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As on this occasion St. Paul undoubtedly celebrated the Eucharist at midnight, it may be well to say a few words on this, with especial reference to the revival of Evening celebrations amongst ourselves at the present time.

Whether the practice was the common one in the very early Apostolic times we know

had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

“Talked a long while,” *i. e.*, familiarly (*ὁμιλήσας*), a different word to that translated preached or discoursed, in verses 7 and 9.

12. “And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.” Comforted, we may be sure, not merely because their relative or friend had been restored to life, but for the assur-

not. This may have been a special occasion when the Apostle could not command his own time. However, according to Pliny's letter to Trajan, the Eucharist was celebrated in the very early morning, *i. e.*, before daybreak, for the confession which Pliny took from the mouths of some apostatizing Christians is, “They confessed to him that the sun of their crime or error was, that they were used to meet on a certain stated day before it was light, and sing a hymn to Christ as to their God, and to bind themselves by a covenant, or sacrament, not unto any wickedness, but that they should not commit any theft,” &c. This, be it remembered, was in a province adjoining Troas, and evidently describes the rule. [In an Excursus I have given Pliny's letter and the emperor's answer in full.] After this Socrates informs us that the only Christians who celebrated the Eucharist in the evening were those of Egypt and the Thebais, and in this they differed from the whole of the rest of the world, even from their neighbours at Alexandria. (Bingham, xiii. ix. 3.)

From other references in the same writer it seems that the time had afterwards been changed to 9 a.m. There can be not the least doubt that whatever may have been, under the force of circumstances, the practice in the Primitive Church, the Catholic Church in all its branches adopted the early time of celebrating. Evening Communion, *i. e.*, celebration after an evensong, beginning at 6.30, are now introduced by some amongst us, and on the plea of convenience, and I believe almost entirely, the convenience of female servants, who, it is supposed, cannot be spared before that time; so that those who take advantage of this have to leave the church at least three-quarters of an hour after the general congregation is dispersed. I think the propriety of such a practice is open to the gravest doubts. I have heard many Christians express their doubts as to the usefulness of evening services at all, on account of the disorders which take place when they break up. When an undergraduate at Cambridge, I heard of the Rev. W. Carus, the evening preacher to an immense crowd in great St. Mary's, bitterly denouncing the “cursed assignations,” as he called them, which took place at the breaking up of the enormous congregation. The after congregation staying for the celebration, consisting almost entirely of females, as it would be with us, would be still less under observation when they left the church. And then the reception of the Blessed Sacrament surely requires some little quiet thought and preparation, and is the chatter of the whole day a fit preparation? Add to this that there are now multitudes of churches in which the wants of this very class are provided for by celebrations at five, six, seven, and eight in the morning. At a celebration at six o'clock, in a neighbouring city, there are 200 communicants at six o'clock a.m. at Easter, and so it is in all the large towns. And, after all, is not the early attendance a self-denying, and the post-evensong one a lazy practice? The one involves early rising, the other staying out late at night. Can there be a shadow of a doubt as to which St. Paul, if he were now with us, would prefer?



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

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

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for <sup>p</sup> he hasted, if it were possible for him, <sup>a</sup> to be at Jerusalem <sup>r</sup> the day of Pentecost.

p ch. xviii. 21.  
& xix. 21. &  
xxi. 4, 12.  
q ch. xxiv. 17.  
r ch. ii. 1.  
1 Cor. xvi. 8.

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15. "And tarried at Trogyllium." So D., H., L., P.; but omitted by N, A., B., C., E., some Cursives, Vulg., Copt., Arm., &c.

ance it afforded to them that all the dead, when they hear the voice of the Son of Man, shall live.

13. "And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos . . . go afoot." In sailing from Troas to Assos, they would have to round a promontory, and St. Paul determined to go alone—perhaps because he wished to see some Christians on the way between the two towns—or perhaps because he desired to have more quiet for prayer and meditation than he would have on board a crowded ship. The walk was twenty-four miles.

14. "And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene." This Mitylene was the port of the Island of Lesbos.

15. "And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios: and the next," &c. We are not to suppose that the Apostle landed and preached at each of these ports, but that the vessel harboured there for the night.

16. "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus . . . the day of Pentecost." "To sail by Ephesus," *i. e.*, not to land there.

"For he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem." It is very extraordinary that he should not visit such a Church as that of Ephesus, in order that he might keep a Jewish Feast in Jerusalem. But no doubt he did this by special inspiration, "in

17 ¶ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

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the Spirit," for it was the will of God that the events which took place at that festival, owing mainly to the immense concourse of people in Jerusalem to keep the same feast, should lead to his imprisonment, first at Jerusalem, and then at Rome; and these imprisonments led to the Gospel being proclaimed to Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice, and their courts, and then at Rome, perhaps, before the Emperor. Cornelius à Lapeyre endeavours to show that Paul kept, not the Jewish feast, but a Christian Pentecost, but this is a mistake. Paul never ceased to be a Jew, and, as such, to observe all that he possibly could of the "Jew's religion." He would desire to be in Jerusalem on the very day in which the Holy Ghost descended, and to put up on that day, in that temple, which His Master had called the house of prayer for all nations, a prayer that the Holy Ghost might be poured out upon them abundantly.

17. "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." These elders were either the presiding ministers of the various Christian congregations in Ephesus and the neighbourhood, exercising pastoral superintendence over each separately, or they were a chapter or collegiate body, exercising superintendence jointly over all the various congregations of Christians in the great city. I think, most probably, the latter, because such a form of government would be unifying, whereas the former would be apparently more disintegrating. Was there then no Bishop of Ephesus? Of course there was, and that Bishop was the Apostle himself; for he sent for these men to meet him at Miletus, and they obeyed him, and listened to a charge from him which they need not have done on any principle of Presbyterian or Congregational Church government. Indeed, on such principles, if established by God from the first, they ought to have repudiated any authority in any single person to charge them as a superior, or oversee them, for by doing so they would have asserted, at the very outset of the Church's career, the liberty of the Presbyterian or Congregational pastorate; but, by thus deferring to St. Paul so far as to listen to him as an authoritative teacher between them and Christ, they surrendered such liberty. Was then the Apostolic authority after this exercised over them by single persons? Yes, assuredly: first, by Timothy, as the delegate or vicar of St. Paul, and afterwards by the Angel of

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

\* ch. xviii. 19.  
& xix. 1, 10.

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me \*by the lying in wait of the Jews :

\* ver. 3.

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19. "Many tears." So C., H., L., P., most Cursives, &c. ; but N., A., B., D., E., some Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., omit "many."

the Church, when that part of Asia came under the Apostolate of St. John.

18. "And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first . . . at all seasons." What a remarkable opening of the charge! He appeals to their knowledge of him—how he had lived, not in secret, but always before them. To use the Old Testament phrase, how he had gone in and out among them.

19. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind," &c. "The life even of the chief pastors ought always to be very remote from all pride and stateliness. The necessity of training up the subordinate pastors in *humility* obliges the most humble bishops to propose their own way of life to them for an example." (Quesnel.)

"And with many tears, and temptations, which befell me." Why these tears? Of course, from the declensions from the faith of those who had begun well, as the Galatian Christians, from the falling back of others into the sins and impurities of their heathen state; but may it not also be connected with what follows, "Temptations [or trials] which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews"? St. Paul's love to his countrymen was unbounded. He could wish, he once says, that he could be anathema from Christ for their sakes. Nothing so cut him to the quick as to see his countrymen—his brethren—his fellow-worshippers of the one true God, throwing away their hopes, their pre-eminence amongst the nations, the glories God had in store for them, and their assurances of forgiveness and a joyful resurrection, all through their rejection of the Messiah Whom God had provided.

"By the lying in wait of the Jews." We read of no particular instance of this in the account of St. Paul's sojourn at Ephesus,

20 *And* how "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 <sup>x</sup> Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, <sup>y</sup> repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>x</sup> ch. xviii. 5.  
<sup>y</sup> Mark i. 15.  
 Luke xxiv. 47.  
 ch. ii. 38.

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21. "Toward our Lord Jesus Christ." So N, A., C., (D.), E., many Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Copt., Arm.; but "Christ" omitted by B., H., L., P., forty Cursives, Sab., &c.

but their hostility to him was so unremitting, that he was always in danger from their secret attacks, as, for instance, at Cenchrea.

20. "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," &c. Can we surmise what the things were which he had a temptation to keep in the background? Evidently the severer aspects of Christianity—that Christ being crucified for them did not supersede the necessity for each one of them to crucify his own evil nature with its affections and lusts—that their lives must be lives of spiritual warfare, and so that they must "put on the whole armour of God," if they would "stand in the evil day, and having done all, stand." We learn what his teaching of the Ephesian Church was from his Epistle: and in that Epistle he not only reminds them of their high privileges, and of the grace to which God had elected them, but of the low and degrading sins into which they were yet liable to fall (Ephes. v. 1-13).

"And have taught you publicly, and from house to house." So that the chief bishop of the churches of the Gentiles, on whom lay the care of all the churches, considered house-to-house visitation one of his duties. On this Quesnel remarks: "Fidelity requires a Pastor not only to communicate what is strictly necessary, but likewise to keep back nothing that is profitable. Private instructions make the deepest impression, and are often absolutely necessary."

21. "Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith," &c. "Repentance toward God," that is, not merely sorrow and shame for having committed sin, but for having committed it against God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him," &c.

"And faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." "Ye believe

22 And now, behold, <sup>2</sup> I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall <sup>2</sup> *ch. xix. 21.* me there :

23 Save that <sup>a</sup> the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions || abide <sup>a</sup> *ch. xxi. 4, 11.* me. <sup>b</sup> *1 Thess. iii. 3.* <sup>c</sup> *Or, wait for me.*

in God, believe also in me." "Believe in him." But as what? As the Incarnate Son of God—as dying for our sins and rising again for our justification—as the Head of His Body the Church—as giving His Body and Blood for our spiritual food—as coming again to judge. In all these respects St. Paul constantly called upon all men to believe in Jesus Christ.

Here, then, we have St. Paul's "whole duty of man." It includes all service, all worship, all sacraments. If a man truly repents, and if his repentance is Christian, he will take Christ's yoke upon him, and seek to be joined to Him in Baptism, and he will receive the Eucharist to cement this union, and to receive strength to live as one in union with the Lord.

22. "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem," &c. "In the spirit." Does this mean in his own spirit, or in the Holy Spirit? We answer, both: he felt in his own spirit an irrepresible call to go to Jerusalem, but he would not have felt this had not the will of the Holy Spirit acted powerfully and irresistibly on his.

"Not knowing the things that shall befall me there." He had the spirit of prophecy, but not to know the whole future, not even all that future which concerned himself; but only that part of it which it was the will of the Holy Spirit to make known to him.

23. "Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city," &c. We have one instance of this witness of the Spirit through the lips of Agabus, in the next chapter (xxi. 11), and we gather from this verse that similar intimations were given in every city in which he rested.

Howson refers to Paley's "Horæ Paulinæ," in which attention is called to Romans xv. 30, where the Apostle beseeches the Roman Christians "to strive together in their prayers for him, that he might be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa." Such a sorrowful foreboding was probably written down in Corinth after

- 24 But <sup>b</sup> none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, <sup>c</sup> so that I might finish my course with joy, <sup>d</sup> and the ministry, <sup>e</sup> which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.
- 25 And now, behold, 'I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xxi. 13.  
Rom. viii. 35.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. iv. 16.  
<sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 7.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. i. 17.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. iv. 1.  
<sup>e</sup> Gal. i. 1.  
Titus i. 3.  
<sup>f</sup> ver. 38.  
Rom. xv. 23.

24. "With joy." Omitted by N, A., B., D., three Cursives, Vulg., &c.; retained by C., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, &c.  
25. "The kingdom of God." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, &c.; but N, A., B., C., and a few Cursives (13, 15, 36, 180) omit "of God."

one of those prophetic intimations here referred to, and long before this address to the Ephesian elders.

24. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself," &c. The Revisers, giving the same sense, translate: "But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself (or in comparison of accomplishing my course)." "A servant of God considers only his duty, without regarding the danger, and the greatest part of the world considers only the danger, without any regard to their duty."

"With joy." These words are not found in leading Uncials. Chrysostom, however, in his exposition, notices them. If we leave them out, then we have a sublime meaning: that no matter whether the future in this world be joyful or not, the servant of Christ desires to finish his course and bear his witness; but why should we not retain them, for what was the joy of the Apostle, but the winning of souls to Christ, as he writes to the Thessalonians, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20).

25. "And now, behold, I know that ye all . . . see my face no more." Much has been made of this passage, as bearing on the question of inspiration. It is assumed, from certain passages in the Pastoral Epistles, that St. Paul was mistaken in his foreboding, and that he did actually visit Ephesus again. Thus the declaration in 1 Tim. i. 3, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went unto Macedonia" seems to be out of place except after this charge. The same also applies to 2 Tim. iv. 20: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum [or Miletus] sick." Could he have left him at

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

27 For <sup>h</sup> I have not shunned to declare unto you  
 all <sup>l</sup> the counsel of God.

g ch. xviii. 6.  
 2 Cor. vii. 2.  
 h ver. 20.  
 l Luke vii. 30.  
 John xv. 15.  
 Eph. i. 11.

Miletus, and himself not have visited Ephesus? On this account some have supposed that he foresaw that all the elders then before him would die before his return, but this seems unlikely. May it not then have been a foreboding of his mere human soul, which God for some cause allowed him to entertain, and yet prevented its fulfilment? We cannot tell; and we had better not hazard unwarrantable conjecture.

26, 27. "I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." What was this whole counsel? It was that body of Christian truth and morals which was revealed to St. Paul by the Holy Spirit. Where is it to be found now? Evidently in the pages of the New Testament. We have there, if anywhere, the fulness of Divine Truth. Who are those who find it there? Those who approach the study of that holy book with all humility and faith. Are we to draw our doctrines from that Holy Book unaided? No, we are to defer to the interpretations of those who lived nearest to the times of the writers of the New Testament, *i. e.*, in the purest times of Christianity. What do we gather that whole counsel of God to have been which St. Paul especially set before the Ephesian Church? The eternal purpose of God in gathering a Church from among the Gentiles. The quickening of the Gentiles with the life of Christ. The oneness of the Church as one Body in Christ. The bounden duty of each member of the Church to keep himself holy in body and soul. The necessity of looking upon the Christian course as a life-long conflict. These are the leading points of St. Paul's teaching to these very men, as set forth in his Epistle to them and their flocks. If ministers are now to be "pure from the blood of all men," as St. Paul was, they must set forth, as he did, the truths respecting the mystical Body of Christ, its Unity as one Body, its purity, so that they who belong to it must be pure; its growth in Christ in one Body, its dependence upon Him for grace, and the necessity laid upon each member to exert himself unremittingly to continue in it to the end.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 16.  
<sup>l</sup> 1 Pet. v. 2.

28 ¶ <sup>k</sup> Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost

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28. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost," &c. Notice how pastors have first to take heed to themselves, and then to the flock. Unless they take heed to themselves, so as to live as becometh the Gospel which they preach, and the Sacraments which they dispense, how can the flock be benefited? For the things which they teach are not such as can be taught indifferently by good and by bad—by careful and serious, and by careless and frivolous persons. How can a man commend to others the faith of Christ, who lives as if he did not believe it himself? And so the Church demands of each candidate for the priesthood, "Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves and your families according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?" And in the Litany we pray for the "illumination of all bishops, priests, and deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of God's Word, that both by their preaching and living, they may set it forth, and show it accordingly."

"To all the flock." The Bishop, in the Ordering of Priests, is bound to say to them, "And if it shall happen the same Church, or any member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment (*i. e.*, of course, if the fault be not repented of) that will ensue."

"Over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." The Revisers translate this "bishops," but like many other of their renderings, it is misleading, for from the first century to the nineteenth, the term "bishop" has always been applied to those who oversee the pastors of many congregations; and this even by those who deny and oppose diocesan episcopacy. Thus, the ministers of congregational or presbyterian congregations are never called, in common speech, bishops, though in controversy the dignity or function of the office may be claimed for them. The word overseers (or, as some suggest, watchers), should be used, as in the Authorized, for none of these men had authority over more than one congregation, the Apostle himself alone overseeing and ordering all the congregations of the city (and there must have been very



'hath made you overseers, to feed the church of ' 1 Cor. xii. 28.

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28. "To feed the church of God." So N, B., several Cursives, Vulgate, and some Syriac; but A., C", D., E., and many Cursives, read, "the church of the Lord;" and H., L., P., and most later MSS., read, "the Lord and God." But see Scrivener's examination of the readings at the end of this chapter.

many) as one Church. Afterwards he committed this authority, or some of it, to Timothy.

"To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The words, as they stand, have a twofold doctrinal significance. They assert the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God—*i. e.*, fully partakes of the nature of the Father, the One true God, for He alone shed His Blood for us, and His Blood is here called the Blood of God—the Blood of God incarnate, but still the Blood of God, for by His Incarnation the Second Person of the Trinity has so taken unto Himself the whole manhood, body, blood, soul, and spirit, that He has made it His own.

And secondly, as a sort of sacred corollary on this, the things which are said of His Godhead are said of His Manhood, and *vice versâ*. This, which is called the *communicatio idiomatum*, is a very important doctrine indeed. It underlies, for instance, all prayer to Christ as God. We invoke Him as Christ—as Jesus Christ—as the Lamb of God, but all these terms belong to His humanity. How can we invoke Him under such names? Because He is God, fully partaking of the Divine Nature. If He were a mere man, we could not be certain that He could hear one prayer, or have power to grant one petition; but, being God as well, omnipresent and omniscient, He hears, and has power to answer, all prayers. The following weighty words will illustrate this great truth. "Certainly the Church does say that, "although Christ be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ." But is this possible? How can Godhead and Manhood thus coalesce without forfeiture of that Unity which is a condition of personality? The answer to this question lies in the fact, upon which St. John insists with such prominence, that our Lord's Godhead is the seat of His Personality. The Son of Mary is not a distinct human person, mysteriously linked with the Divine nature of the Eternal Word. The Person of the Son of Mary is Divine and Eternal. It is none other than the Person of the Word. "When he took upon him to deliver man," the Eternal Word "did not abhor the Virgin's womb." He

<sup>m</sup> Eph. i. 7,      God, <sup>m</sup> which he hath purchased <sup>n</sup> with his own  
 14. Col. i. 14.      blood.

Heb. ix. 12.  
 1 Pet. i. 19.  
 Rev. v. 9.

<sup>n</sup> See Heb. ix.  
 14.

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“With his own blood.” See also Scrivener in the note at end of chapter.

clothed Himself with man's bodily and man's immaterial nature; He united it to His own Divinity. “He took man's nature upon him in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is One Christ. . . . Christ's Manhood is not of itself an individual Being; it is not a seat and centre of Personality. It has no conceivable existence apart from the act whereby the Eternal Word in becoming incarnate, called it into being, and made it His own.” (Liddon's Bampton Lectures.)

May we be permitted to add a few words to this? In John vi. 38, the Lord says, “I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” In what capacity does our Lord say this? Evidently in His highest capacity as the Eternal Word, or Son, Who was with God, and was God, but Who was made flesh. But it was not a human nature which came down, but He, the Word, the Son, came down and assumed our flesh. How does He speak of this flesh? He speaks of it all through this chapter (John vi.) as His Flesh: “The bread that I will give is my flesh,” “My flesh is meat indeed,” and so on; and because of this, and solely and wholly because of this, He goes on to speak of His Flesh being life-giving, even as the seed of our Resurrection-life (v. 54). How could He do so? Because His Flesh was the Flesh of the Eternal Word. The Word was made flesh, and because it was His Flesh it was raised infinitely above the conditions of ordinary flesh, and became endowed with Divine properties.

And now let us come to the words of St. Paul here, not the words of St. Paul himself, but the words of St. Paul as the organ or instrument of the Spirit of God. The Church was the Church of God. It was also equally the Church of Christ, because it was His mystical Body. How did it become His Body, His Church? Because He had purchased it. With what? With His own Blood. How could His Blood purchase the Church? Because it was the Blood of Him Who came down from heaven. And Who was this?

29 For I know this, that after my departing ° shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ° Matt. vii. 15.  
2 Pet. ii. 1.

No other than the Word Who was with God, and was God. Because it was His Blood, and for no other reason whatsoever, it was of value sufficient to purchase the Church.

Now this will show us that, so far as our Lord's Divinity is concerned, it is the same whether we read with some MSS. (α, B.), "God," or with others (A., C\*, D., E.), "the Lord," for the shedding of His Blood is the occasion of the highest and divinest result conceivable. It transfers an infinite number of the choicest and most precious souls which God has ever created, from the ownership of God the Father as the Creator, to the peculiar ownership of God the Son as the Redeemer.<sup>1</sup> How can it effect such a result? Because it is the Blood of Him Who was in the beginning with God, and was God, and was made flesh, and with that Flesh assumed our Blood, which Blood, by His assuming it, became of such value that it could purchase the Church. So that if we read, "the Church of the Lord," we cannot understand that "Lord" to be a created Lord, one of "Lords many;" but we must understand it as a name of the Supreme Being used as synonymous with God, as St. Thomas evidently used it when he confessed Jesus as his Lord and his God.<sup>2</sup>

I make no excuse for dwelling at such length upon this important passage with respect to the difference of reading. I think, however, that it will be best, so far as textual criticism is concerned, to reproduce at the end of this chapter the note upon it in Scrivener's "Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament," Third Edition, p. 620.

29, 30. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves . . . to draw away disciples after them." It has been supposed that by the "grievous wolves" St. Paul meant Judaizers who

<sup>1</sup> Of course all that the Son has belongs to the Father, for He says, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine," but that souls of men may in a peculiar way belong to the Son, is manifest from those other words, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me" (John xvii. 6).

<sup>2</sup> The word *Κύριος*, throughout both the Septuagint and New Testament is constantly employed as the equivalent of Jehovah, the incommunicable Name of the Supreme Being, and it is also employed to express common lordship, as in Matt. vi. 24. Now here, Acts xx. 28, it must perforce be used in the highest sense conceivable, that is, as expressing Deity, because of what the Blood of the Being called "Lord" is said to do.

30 Also <sup>p</sup> of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Tim. i. 20.

<sup>l</sup> John ii. 19.

<sup>q</sup> ch. xix. 10.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that <sup>q</sup> by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

would come from without, from a distance, and "enter in" from Jerusalem or Judæa, and that by the men arising "of their own selves," speaking perverse things, he alludes to the false teachers whom he names by name in his first Epistle to Timothy (i. 20), Hymenæus, and Alexander, and also Phygellus and Hermogenes, mentioned in the second Epistle, i. 15. In connection with these latter he speaks sorrowful words respecting "All Asia being turned away from him," which seems to point to some very general defection. The heresy of Hymenæus and Philetus appears to have been a virtual denial of the Resurrection, saying that "it is past already," no doubt teaching that the true Resurrection was that of the soul as distinguished from the body. Notice how St. Paul speaks of these men, not as the holders of allowable opinions, but as grievous wolves, as speakers of perverse things, as overthrowing the faith. He looks upon them as bad men, who loved falsehood rather than the truth. "What is the source of the generality of heresies, but only the desire of gaining followers and disciples? Thus the corruption of the mind proceeds from that of the heart. A man never arrives at the dignity of being a master or teacher of error in heresies, till after he has been a disciple of the devil through pride or presumption." (Quesnel.)

31. "Therefore watch, and remember . . . night and day with tears." This warning, these tears, had not been without their due effect; for twenty years or more after this Christ writes to the angel of the Church of Ephesus, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." And yet these solemn words of warning were useful, for the Lord "has somewhat against" this Church, because it has forgotten its first love (Rev. ii. 1-6).

"The space of three years." The last chapter (verses 8 and 10)

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

r Heb. xiii. 9.  
 s ch. ix. 31.  
 t ch. xxvi. 18.  
 Eph. i. 18.  
 Col. i. 12. &  
 iii. 24. Heb. ix.  
 15. 1 Pet. i. 4.  
 u 1 Sam. xii.  
 3. 1 Cor. ix. 12.  
 2 Cor. vii. 2. &  
 xi. 9. & xii. 17.  
 x ch. xviii. 3.  
 1 Cor. iv. 12.  
 1 Thess. ii. 9.  
 2 Thess. iii. 8.

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

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands

32. "And now, brethren." So C., E., H., L., P., most Cursives; but N., A., B., D., 13, 33, 34, 68, 81, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm., omit "brethren."

accounts for only two years and three months, but the "staying in Asia" of verse 22 may cover more than the three months, and bring it on to three years.

32. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace," &c. As the "word" here is associated with God Himself in the building up of these Christian teachers, and giving them their inheritance, it has been supposed, and with much reason, to be the Personal Word, the Logos. It cannot well mean the written word, the Bible, and the only objection to its being the Logos is that St. Paul in speaking of God's Son does not elsewhere use that term. I think it is probable that St. Paul means by it the whole revelation of God's grace and will, and His own personal application of it all to men's souls; and this is in and by Jesus Christ; and so if this term, "the Word of his grace," does not actually mean the Logos, it is a preparation for it, and would lead men's minds to entertain the idea, before the use of the word was actually sanctioned by Apostles.

"Build you up." Notice how this figure is used in St. Paul's Epistle to this Church: "Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner Stone" (Ephes. ii. 20).

"And to give you an inheritance among," &c. Remember also how in the same Epistle to this Church, the Apostle speaks of our having obtained an inheritance, and of the Holy Spirit being the pledge of this inheritance (Ephes. i. 11).

33, 34. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know," &c. What is the reason that he so

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

7 Rom. xv. 1.  
1 Cor. ix. 12.  
2 Cor. xi. 9,  
12. & xii. 13.  
Eph. iv. 28.  
1 Thess. iv.  
11. & v. 14.  
2 Thess. iii. 8.

35 I have shewed you all things, 7 how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

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35. "I have shewed you all things." Revisers translate, "In all things I gave you an example."

apparently abruptly brings in this personal matter respecting his freedom from covetousness? It may be that the earnestness with which he commended the cause of the suffering saints at Jerusalem to their wealthier Gentile brethren, gave an occasion to his malignant and implacable adversaries to say that he did this for his own base purposes, and his words in 2 Cor. vii. 2, "Receive us, we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man," seem to hint at some such accusation.

"To them that were with me." He would not, if possible, allow those that accompanied him, who might be poor or infirm, to live on the contributions of the converts, though he vindicated the right of himself and his brethren to be sustained by those to whom they ministered spiritual things (1 Cor. ix. 6-17).

35. "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak," &c. These are very remarkable words. They seem to imply that these Ephesian overseers, or elders, if they have not incomes of their own wherewith to supply the needs of those in want, are to follow the Apostle's example, and work in order that they may be able to give. Ephes. iv. 28, is parallel. It is one of those many places of Scripture which show what a place in the minds of the Apostles the inculcation of benevolence, of almsgiving, of liberality, had, and this the Apostle proceeds to show was but a reflection of the mind and teaching of Christ Himself, one of Whose words, which they well knew, and which they ought always to have in remembrance, was,

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." St. Paul evidently quotes here, not the substance of many sayings, but the very words of a particular saying of Christ, which has not been preserved in the Gospels. It is remarkable how very few of these sayings, other than those which have been embodied

36 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he <sup>2</sup> kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

<sup>2</sup> ch. vii. 60.

& xxi. 5.

37 And they all wept sore, and <sup>a</sup> fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

<sup>a</sup> Gen. xlv. 11.

& xlvi. 29.

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words <sup>b</sup> which <sup>b</sup> ver. 25.

in the Gospel narrative, have come down to us in tradition, or in the writings of the Fathers. It seems as if God would shut us up to the four Gospels for all reliable accounts of either the acts or the sayings of His Son. The words here preserved afford no new doctrine of Christ, but they simply teach us what we should gather from the Sermon on the Mount—the Sermon on the Plain—many parables, especially those of the Good Samaritan, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Rich Fool, and the prophecy of the Lord's procedure when He comes to judge, in Matt. xxv. When we receive we are passive, we may abuse that which we receive, we may consume it on our lusts, we may not even be grateful to the giver; but when we give, we imitate—miserably feebly, it is true, but still we imitate, the Giver of all good.

36. "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." Thus, he says in his Epistle to this Church, "I bow my knees unto the Father," &c. "Humility and prayer," says Quesnel, "give a pastor's word a force altogether Divine. Men are more closely united with their friends in God, when they separate from one another for His sake."

37. "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." "Tenderness is not forbidden to the holiest men. Who can deserve more of it than a heart like that of St. Paul? True pastors have nothing of that haughty gravity belonging to superior (dignified ecclesiastics) filled with the spirit of the world. . . . A father who is truly such, always receives with kindness and cordial affection the marks and tokens of friendship which come from the least of his children." (Quesnel.)

38. "Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see," &c. What a hold he had got on their hearts! No one could rebuke more severely, reprove more faithfully, exhort more powerfully, and yet how personally they loved him!

I cannot help thinking that this would not have been recorded

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

by St. Luke if he had then known certainly that St. Paul had visited them again. The places in the Pastoral Epistles go some way towards proving that St. Paul did see them again, of which St. Luke was not aware when he wrote this.

#### NOTE ON VARIOUS READINGS OF ACTS XX. 28.

As the reading of verse 28 has been so much controverted, I here, with permission, reproduce the critical examination of it in Dr. Scrivener's third edition of his Introduction to the "Criticism of the New Testament," ch. ix., p. 620.

"Acts xx. 28. τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν περιποίησται διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου ἀλλοματος. This reading of the received Text, though different from that of the majority of copies, is pretty sure to be correct: it has been adopted by Alford (who once rejected θεοῦ for κυρίου), and by Westcott and Hort. Tregelles places it in his margin, though with Lachman and Tischendorf, he has κυρίου in the text. Θεῦ is upheld by M, B (the latter now for certain), 4, 22, 23, 25, 37, 46, 65, 66\* (?), 68, 84, 89, 154, 162, Apost. 12, and ex silentio, on which one can lay but little stress, by Codd. 7, 12, 16, 39, 56, 64, together with 184 and 186, codices not now in England. 'Dei' is read by all known manuscripts, and editions of the Vulgate, except the Complutensian, which was probably altered to suit the parallel Greek. From the Vulgate this form was taken by Erasmus, and after him by Tyndale's and later English versions. Lee's edition of the Peshito (see page 317), has θεοῦ, from three Codices, (the Travancore, a Vatican Lectionary of Adler (xi.) and one at the Bodleian), and so has the Philoxenian Text. Τοῦ κυρίου (differing by but one letter, see our Plates, v., No. 13, x., No. 25), is in A., C\*, D., E. (and, therefore, in d, e), 13, 15, 18, 36 (text), 40, 69, 73, 81, 95\*, 130, 156, 163, 180, 182, 219. Apost. 58, some Catenaæ, the Philoxenian margin, the Thebaic, Memphitic, Armenian, and possibly the Roman Æthiopic (see p. 410), though there the same word is said to represent both θεῦ and κυ. Platt's Æthiopic, all editions of the Peshito except Lee's, and Erpenius' Arabic, have τοῦ χριστοῦ, with Origen once, Theodoret twice, and four copies of Athanasius: the old Latin m. reads, 'Jesu Christi. Other variations, too weakly supported to be worth further notice, are, τοῦ κυρίου θεοῦ, 3, 95\*\*, the Polyglott Arabic; τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου, 47; and the Georgian, τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ. The great mass of later manuscripts give τοῦ κυρίου καὶ θεοῦ, viz. :—C. (tertiâ manu), H., L., P., 24, 31, 111, 183, 185, 187, 188, 189, 221, 224, and more than one hundred other Cursives, including, probably, every one not particularized above. This is the reading of the Complutensian, both in the Greek and Latin, and of some critics who would fain take a safe and middle course; but is countenanced by no version except the Slavonic (see p. 411), and by no ecclesiastical writer before Theophylact (cent. xi.). It is plainly but a device for reconciling the two principal readings; yet from the non-repetition of the Article, and from the general turn of the sentence, it asserts the Divinity of the Saviour almost as unequivocally as θεοῦ could do alone. Our choice evidently lies between κυρίου and θεοῦ, which are pretty equally supported by manuscripts and versions; Patristic testimony, however, may slightly incline to the latter. Foremost comes that bold expression of Ignatius (A.D. 107), ἀνακωμωρήσαντες ἐν ἀλληματὶ θεοῦ (ad Ephes. i.), which the old Latin version renders 'Christi Dei,' and the later interpolator softens into χριστοῦ; so again (ad Roman vi.), τοῦ πάθους τοῦ θεοῦ μου. It may be true that Ignatius "does not adopt it (the



first passage) as a quotation (Davidson, ad locum), yet nothing short of Scriptural authority could have given such early vogue to a term so startling as *αἷμα θεοῦ*, which is also employed by Tertullian (ad uxorem, ii. 3), and Clement of Alexandria (Quis dives, 34). The elder Basil, Epiphanius (twice), Cyril of Alexandria (twice), Ibas (in the Greek only), Ambrose, Cælestine, Fulgentius, Primasius, Cassiodorus, &c., not to mention writers so recent as Æcumenius and Theophylact, expressly support the same word. Manuscripts of Athanasius vary between *θεοῦ*, *κυρίου*, and *χριστοῦ*, but his evidence would be regarded as hostile to the received text, inasmuch as he states (as alleged by Wetstein, that *οὐδαμοῦ ἢ αἷμα θεοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς παραδίδουσαν αἱ γραφαὶ Ἀρειανῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα πολυμήματα* (Contr. Apollinar.); only that for *καθ' ἡμᾶς* (which even Tischendorf cites in his seventh edition), the correct reading is *διχα σαρκὸς* or *διὰ σαρκὸς*, a citation fatal to any such inference. In Chrysostom, too, the readings fluctuate, and some (e.g., Tregelles) have questioned whether the Homilies on the Acts, wherein he has *θεοῦ*, are of his composition. In behalf of *κυρίου* are cited the Latin versions of Irenæus, Lucifer of Cagliari, Augustus, Jerome, Ammonius, Eusebius, Didymus Chrysostom (whence Theophylact), possibly Theodoret, and the Apostolic constitutions, while the exact expression, *Sanguis Dei*, was censured by Origen and others. It has been urged, however, and not without some show of reason (Nolan, 'Integrity of Greek Vulgate,' p. 517, note 135), that the course of Irenæus' argument proves that *θεοῦ* was used in his lost Greek text. After all, internal evidence—subjective feeling, if it must be so called—will decide the critic's choice where authorities are so much divided as here. It seems reasonable to say that the whole mass of witnesses for *τοῦ κυρίου καὶ θεοῦ* vouches for the existence of *θεοῦ* in the earliest codices, the commonplace *κυρίου* being the rather received from other quarters, as it tends more distinctly to point to the Divine Person indicated in the passage. If this view be accepted, the preponderance in favour of *θεοῦ*, undoubtedly the harder form (see p. 493), is very marked, and when the consideration suggested above (p. 497) from Dean Alford is added, there will remain little room for hesitation. It has been pleaded on both sides of the question, and appears little relevant to the case of either, that St. Paul employs in ten places, the expression *ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ*, but never once *ἐκκλησία τοῦ κυρίου*, or *τοῦ χριστοῦ*.

It is right to mention that, in place of *τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος*, the more emphatic form *τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου* ought to be adopted from N, A. (see Plate v., No. 13), B, C, D, E., 31, 182, 184 (Sanderson), with some twenty other Cursives, Didymus, &c., while *τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος* is only in H., L., P., the majority of Cursives, Athanasius, Chrysostom, &c."

## CHAP. XXI.

AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto

1. "And it came to pass that after we were gotten from them . . . Patara." "After we were gotten from them." The word translated "gotten," is rendered "parted from them" by the Revisers, but may be rendered properly by the still stronger term, "were torn from them," expressing somewhat the pain of parting.

Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara :

2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

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

4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days : <sup>a ver. 12.</sup> <sup>ch. xx. 23.</sup> said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

4. "And finding disciples." "Having found the disciples," as if we had to seek them.

"Unto Coos, or Cos." A small island near the coast. "It was celebrated for its light woven fabrics, and for its wines—also for a temple of Æsculapius, to which a school of physicians was attached, and which was virtually from its votive offerings a museum of anatomy and pathology" (from Smith's "Dictionary," where also the reader will find many points of interest in the past connection of the island with the Jews.)

"Unto Rhodes." A very celebrated island of the Grecian Archipelago, opposite the high Mysian and Carian headlands, at the south-west extremity of the peninsula of Asia Minor. It was the last place where the Christians of the East held out against the advancing Saracens, and subsequently it was once more famous as the home and fortress of the Knights Hospitallers of St John.

Patara, on the coast of Lydia, was the harbour of Xanthus.

2, 3. "And finding a ship . . . for there the ship was to unlade her burden." "When we had discovered Cyprus," *i.e.*, "when we had come in sight of." The Greek *αναβαίνουσις* was the nautical term for bringing the land in view, by approaching it, and so bringing it up, as it were, above the horizon.

4. "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days," &c. The word "finding" signifies to find out after seeking. It apparently implies that there was here only a small Church of Christians.

"Who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem." They were enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that they had a prophetic gift of insight into the future ; but they seem not to have had that higher gift which St. Paul had, of a

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

<sup>b</sup> ch. xx. 36.

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determined will to face any and every danger, if so be he might thereby glorify his Master. They looked merely to the danger, and warned him on mere human motives. That he was right in putting gently aside all their warnings is evident from his words to the Ephesian elders. "Now behold I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there . . . none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself," &c. (xx. 22, 25.) That this journey to Jerusalem was with the Lord's approval is evident from the vision of Christ with which he was favoured, and His words, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness in Rome also" (xxiii. 11). Chrysostom remarks that the prophecy, viz., that St. Paul should suffer at Jerusalem, was from the Spirit, but not the exhortation that he should avoid the danger—this was from themselves.

5. "And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way," &c.

"Brought us on our way, with wives and children." This, it has been noticed, is the first mention of children as forming a part of a Christian assembly. The children came with the men and women, as having as much interest in the person and work of the Apostle as their elders.

Quesnel beautifully remarks:—"Nothing but faith can form so strict and tender an union betwixt persons unknown to one another, and in so short a time."

"We kneeled down on the shore, and prayed." Commentators remind us that the Jews were wont to have *proseuchæ*, or places of prayer on the sea-shore. Thus Howson quotes Biscoe as saying, "Philo tells us that the Jews of Alexandria, when Flaccus, the governor of Egypt, who had been their great enemy, was arrested by order of the Emperor Caius (Caligula), not being able to assemble at their synagogues, which had been taken from them, crowded out at the gates of the city early in the morning, went to the neighbouring shores, and standing in a most pure place, with one

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we  
<sup>c</sup> John i. 11. took ship; and they returned <sup>c</sup> home again.

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

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and we entered into the  
<sup>d</sup> Eph. iv. 11. house of Philip <sup>d</sup> the evangelist, <sup>e</sup> which was *one*  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. iv. 5. of the seven; and abode with him.  
<sup>e</sup> ch. vi. 5. &  
 viii. 26, 40.

8. "We that were of Paul's company." So H., L., P., and most Cursives; but "that were of Paul's company" omitted by N, A., B., C., E., thirty Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm., &c.

accord lifted up their voices in praising God." Tertullian says that "the Jews in his time, when they kept their great fast, left their synagogues, and on every shore sent forth their praises to heaven."

But need we imagine any *proseuchæ*? The disciples out of their love to the Apostle naturally accompany him as far as they could, which was to the ship, and on taking leave at the last moment they prayed together.

6, 7. "And when we had taken our leave . . . abode with them one day." "Came to Ptolemais." Anciently called Accho, one of the oldest cities of Palestine, mentioned in Judges i. 31, "Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho," &c. It was rebuilt by Ptolemy Soter, King of Egypt, and the old name survives to this day in Acre, St. Jean d'Acre.

8. "And the next day we that were of Paul's company . . . one of the seven; and abode with him." "Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven." This mention of Philip as one of the "seven" seems to imply that they were a distinct body, not Apostles, though in preaching and teaching with power they acted as Apostles; nor were they the third order of ministers, whose qualifications are laid down in the first Pastoral Epistle. Philip is here called an Evangelist, which seems to answer to our word "missionary." In Ephes. iv. 11 the Evangelist is distinguished from the Apostle, Prophet, and Teacher; and so we gather, I think, that he went about proclaiming the Gospel, though not with the authority of the Apostle, who was over him, and the rest of the Church,

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

<sup>f</sup> Joel ii. 28.  
ch. ii. 17.

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named <sup>g</sup> Agabus.

<sup>g</sup> ch. xi. 28.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, <sup>h</sup> So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 33.  
ch. xx. 23.

and yet having a much wider field of labour than the pastor, who was the overseer of the congregation.

9. "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." The prophetic gift was sometimes conferred upon women, thus St. Paul speaks of a woman "praying or prophesying" (1 Cor. xi. 5), and in the great prophecy of Joel, the Lord promises "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (ii. 28). How does this accord with St. Paul's canon that "a woman should be in silence in the church"? Very well, because there are many ways of uttering prophecies besides speaking them aloud in the church. The latter was strictly forbidden (at least by St. Paul) as a shameful thing (1 Corinth. xiv. 35). The mention here of these virgins prophesying is to be accounted for on the ground that they added their testimony to the danger of St. Paul's journey to Jerusalem. These virgins had probably dedicated themselves to the Lord in a life of virginity, which St. Paul lays down as the more perfect way of serving God: "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." (1 Cor. vii. 34.)

10, 11. "And as we tarried there many days . . . hands of the Gentiles." This was the same prophet who foretold the dearth (xi. 28), but on this occasion he accompanied his words with a symbolic action, as did the prophets of old. Thus Isaiah walked for three years naked and barefoot (xx. 2). Jeremiah hid the linen

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> ch. xx. 24. 13 Then Paul answered, <sup>1</sup>What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, <sup>k</sup> saying, <sup>k</sup> The will of the Lord be done.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. vi. 10.  
& xxvi. 42.  
Luke xi. 2.  
& xxii. 42.

girdle by Euphrates (xiii. 1 *sq.*). Ezekiel portrayed Jerusalem upon a tile (iv. 1).

12, 13. "And when we heard these things . . . die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." "We," that is Luke himself, and St. Paul's other companions. These joined with the Christians of Cæsarea in endeavouring to dissuade the Apostle.

"What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?" Notice the tenderness and sensitiveness of the Apostle. "A heart already tried with so many sufferings, and which promises itself nothing from its own ability, may speak with this confidence." (Quesnel.)

May we be permitted to ask whether St. Paul resolved thus as it were blindly, from the mere desire to honour the Name of the Lord, and not knowing or considering how this was to come to pass? I think that he set before himself the vast multitude of Jews that would attend the feast, and how that he would have the opportunity of vindicating his mission to them—how he yet continued a Jew, and taught the Jews nothing contrary to the law, even whilst he declared the freedom of the Gentiles—and how he would show the charity of the Gentile churches in the offerings he brought for the relief of the distress of the poor saints at Jerusalem.

14. "And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done." They seemed to have perceived that the inspiration of the Apostle was of a higher order than that of Agabus, and the inferior prophets, inasmuch as it led him to brave the danger which they only foresaw and were afraid of. There may be a reminiscence of the words of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done," and of the prayer of the Lord Himself in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine be done."

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

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

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

17 <sup>1</sup> And when we were come to Jerusalem, the <sup>1</sup> ch. xv. 4. brethren received us gladly.

15. "Took up our carriages." See below.

16. "Brought with them." It may be, "brought us to." Syriac translates, "who conducted with them a certain brother of the first disciples whose name was Mnason, and he was come from Kypros, to receive us into his house."

to Jerusalem." "We took up our carriages." Rather, we took up our baggage, the meaning of the word having altered since the publication of the Authorized; then it signified that which is carried, now it signifies that which carries. An instance of the old meaning is to be found in 1 Sam. xvii. 22: "David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage," meaning, left his baggage (impedimenta). "The literal translation of the word found in the Rec. Text (*ἀποσκευασάμενοι*) would be "having stowed away our luggage," that is, having stowed away our heavy packages in Cæsarea, to await our return. The reading, however, of the older and more trustworthy authorities is *ἐπισκευασάμενοι*, which is best rendered by "having packed up our baggage," *i.e.*, having placed it on pack-horses, or other beasts of burden with a view of carrying it with us up to Jerusalem." (Howson.) The allusion seems to indicate some thought about its safety, which would naturally be the case if one or more of the packages contained the contributions of the Gentiles.

16. "There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, . . . with whom we should lodge." This Mnason had a house in Jerusalem, capable of lodging not only St. Paul, but those with him, Luke and others. It is doubtful whether the place should be translated as in the Authorized or "brought us to one Mnason."

"An old disciple," or a disciple from the beginning, probably a sojourner in Jerusalem at the time of the first Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit.

17, 18. "And when we were come to Jerusalem . . . all the elders were present." They had been apprised of St. Paul's coming, and welcomed him at the house of Mnason, but on the next day the

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto <sup>m</sup> James; and all the elders were present.

<sup>m</sup> ch. xv. 13.  
Gal. i. 19. &  
ii. 9.

<sup>n</sup> ch. xv. 4, 12.  
Rom. xv. 18,  
19.

<sup>o</sup> ch. i. 17. &  
xx. 24.

19 And when he had saluted them, <sup>n</sup> he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles <sup>o</sup> by his ministry.

<sup>p</sup> ch. xxii. 3.  
Rom. x. 2.  
Gal. i. 14.

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

20. "They glorified the Lord." So D., H., P., by far the greater part of Cursives, Sah.; but N, A., B., C., E., L., thirty Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Copt., Arm., read, "God."

Apostle presented himself at a formal meeting of the whole Church before James.

Why should it be said that "Paul went to James, and all the elders were present"? No other reason can be given than that James was the perpetual Bishop or President of the whole Church, and that St. Paul, recognizing this, communicates with the Church in his presence.

19, 20. "And when he had saluted them, he declared . . . all zealous of the law." "He declared particularly," *i.e.*, one by one, *seriatim*. This is not now clearly understood in the word "particularly."

"How many thousands." Literally, rather, how many myriads. It is not at all improbable that, taking into account the very great population of Jerusalem and Judæa, and the numbers of Christian Jews who would come up to the feast, it was literally true that they might be numbered by tens of thousands.

"And they are all zealous of the law." It seems strange to us that men should be at once zealous for the law, and also sincere believers in the system which would naturally supersede the law; but we are to take into account two things—first, that the Lord Himself kept the law. He went up to the Jewish feasts; He maintained the sanctity of the Temple against the very priests themselves; He declared that "not one tittle of the law should fail." Besides this, all the original Apostles kept the law. St. Paul himself kept it, so that he went somewhat out of his way to circumcise Timothy, and took upon himself Jewish vows, and went long journeys



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

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

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21. "All the Jews." So N, B., C., H., L., P., most Cursives, &c.; but A., D., E., Vulg., Copt., omit "all."

22. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear," &c. So N, A., C<sup>2</sup>, D., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg.; but B., C\*, 15, 36, 73, 137, 180, Sah., Copt., Syriac (nearly), Æth., &c., omit, "the multitude must (needs) come together."

to keep feasts at Jerusalem. And, secondly, God had not yet formally abrogated the law—He would do so in a few years by the destruction of Jerusalem, but He had not done so yet.

21. "And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews," &c. This, of course, was a malignant slander, and any of the companions of St. Paul who travelled with him, and knew how he dealt with Jewish proselytes, could refute it. But there was, perhaps, this grain of truth in it. The Apostle had much spiritual insight into God's dealings with his countrymen, and so he was aware that the law had done its work. It was the pædagogus to bring men to Christ, and now that Christ was come, it was no longer needed (Gal. iii. 25). But though it was no longer needed, God, out of compassion to the religious feelings, and even prejudices, of his ancient people, tolerated it. And St. Paul would feel that he must fall in with the mind of God, and till it was formally and distinctly abrogated, it must be considered as binding upon the chosen people, amongst whom he reckoned himself. But, holding such views of the decay and speedy disappearance of the old system, he could not treat it as if it were permanent. Many expressions would escape him similar to that in Hebrews viii. 13, "That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away," and such expressions would be caught up by his implacable adversaries, and made to express more than he meant, as that Judaism and its circumcision and ceremonies, must now be given up, even by Jews, which thing was in the teeth both of his teaching and his own practice.

22. "What is it, therefore? the multitude must needs come

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

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

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24. "Be at charges with them." "Spend money upon them;" *impende in illis* (Vulg.).

together: for they will," &c. This seems to mean that the feeling of the multitude, or great majority of Christian Jews, was very bitter on this matter, and that they would certainly without delay come together to demand of St. Paul the truth of these accusations.

23, 24. "Do therefore this that we say to thee . . . walkest orderly, and keepest the law." No mere verbal disclaimer on St. Paul's part would have been held by the "multitude" to be sufficient. A definite act of ultra-obedience, if we may so term it, must be performed by St. Paul, and how was this to be accomplished? It providentially happened that there were four poor men who had taken the Nazarite vow upon them, but had not wherewithal to pay for the sacrifices which were ordered by the law to be offered at the time of the completion of the vow, and were waiting for some charitable and wealthy Jews to take compassion upon them and help to bear the cost of the sacrifices. This cost was considerable for poor men, for it consisted of "one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings." (Numbers vi. 14, 15.) Besides this, there was a fee to the priests when they shaved their hair, which, during the time of the vow, had been allowed to grow (verse 18). By St. Paul's associating with these men, and joining in their purifications, and being at charges with them, *i.e.*, wholly or in part defraying the cost of their sacrifices, he would perform one of the most meritorious acts possible in the eyes of his fellow Jews. Thus we read in Josephus that Agrippa, when he came to take possession of his kingdom,

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, <sup>r</sup> we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. <sup>r ch. xv. 20, 29.</sup>

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them <sup>s</sup> entered into the <sup>s ch. xxiv. 18.</sup>

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25. "We have written and concluded." So N, A., C., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, &c.; but B., D., Copt., read, "we have sent and concluded."

"That they observe no such thing, save only that," omitted by N, A., B.; but C., D., E., H., L., P., and most Cursives, read as in Rec. Text.

"came to Jerusalem, and offered all the sacrifices that belonged to him, and omitted nothing which the law required; on which account he ordained that many of the Nazarites should have their heads shorn," which of course meant, that he had paid the price of their sacrifices. ("Antiquities," xix. 6, 1.)<sup>1</sup>

If it be objected that in the case of St. Paul, it would be laying a heavy burden upon a poor man, we can have no doubt that all this would be taken into consideration by those who tendered the advice, just as a similar proposal would be by any Christian now.

25. "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded," &c. They are careful, whilst making this proposal to the Apostle, to assert the liberty of the Gentiles, that they need not observe any such thing.

26. "Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them," &c. This means (as Lewin says) that St. Paul, "taking the four Nazarites with him, went up to the Temple, and entering by the Corinthian, or Beautiful Gate of the Temple, into the court of the women, where was the apartment appropriated for the Nazarites, announced to the priest that himself and his com-

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<sup>1</sup> It has been asked how St. Paul could purify himself with these men, and otherwise associate himself with them, if he was not under the Nazarite vow himself. To which some assume that it was lawful for anyone thus partially to put himself under these vows, if he might by so doing help his fellow Jews; but this is unsatisfactory, and the better way is, with Lewin, to suppose that, as on a former occasion, so now St. Paul had taken upon himself Nazarite vows, which he intended to consummate at Jerusalem with the usual offerings, and that, knowing this, James and the elders thought that he might the more effectually repel the charges against him by a further act of charity in being at charges with these four poor Christian Jews

temple, 'to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

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panions intended to observe the seven days' purification, with the accustomed offerings, and then 'to shave the head.'

And now we have to consider whether all this was right, *i.e.*, in the sight of God; for some expositors and divines have thrown doubts upon it, as for instance, that St. James proposed something in accordance not only with his prejudices as a Jew, but also in accordance with his own practices as a perpetual Nazarite, which, on the testimony of later writers, he is assumed to have been. And doubt has also been thrown on the conduct of St. Paul in this matter—whether, in what he did, he obeyed the guidance of God, and whether he did not go too far in the way of conciliation.

Now, we are most interested at present with the character of St. Paul. He is the Apostle who certainly of his own accord "shaved his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow," and he is also the Apostle who, with respect to the Judaizing party at Jerusalem, had written, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you" (Gal. ii. 5). It is impossible to suppose that such a man, on such an occasion, forgot to put himself consciously under the guidance of God, and it is equally impossible to suppose that God did not guide him.

But to this it is answered, that the issue was disastrous; and in reply to this we ask, what was the issue? The issue intended by James on the one side, and Paul on the other, was, that the Christian Jews should see that Paul, the Christian Jew, "himself walked orderly and kept the law." In all probability it did show this. In all probability it removed much jealousy and misconception, not from the minds of all—of course we could scarcely hope that it would do this—but from all candid minds.

But was not the issue the imprisonment of St. Paul? It was rather, we answer, the saving of his life; for we are to remember that St. Paul, though distrusted by the believing, was so hated by the unbelieving Jews that, humanly speaking, unless protected by the Roman power, he would never have escaped assassination. Can anyone have the face to say that if St. James had not tendered this advice, or St. Paul not accepted it, that St. Paul would

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, <sup>u</sup> the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the <sup>v</sup> temple, stirred up all the people, and <sup>x</sup> laid hands <sup>z</sup> on him, u ch. xxiv. 18. z ch. xxvi. 21.

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, <sup>y</sup> that teacheth all *men* every where against <sup>z</sup> the people, and the law, and this place: and y ch. xxiv. 5, 6.

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never have showed himself in the temple? Impossible. He never would have visited Jerusalem without spending hours in the fane of which Christ had said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations." Whether in the temple, or in the streets, or in the innermost apartments of the house of Mnason, he would not have been safe for a moment, if the Jews, I mean the unbelieving ones, found out that he was in Jerusalem. The moment they recognized him they went about to kill him, and nothing but the interference of the Roman power saved his life, and that interference, I need not say, could not have well taken effect except in some place close to the garrison tower, as the temple was. If there was a fault anywhere, it was that he disregarded the oft-repeated prophecies which warned him of the danger of going up at all to the fanatical city; but this I have disposed of in a former note.

27. "And when the seven days were almost ended." These seven days could not be the duration of the Nazarites' vow, which was thirty days, but of the period of special purification, at the end of which they were released from the obligations of the vow.

"The Jews which were of Asia." These were not only well acquainted with the appearance of the Apostle, because he had so recently dwelt there some time, and taught publicly, but also recognized his companion Trophimus, a fellow citizen of theirs. It is to be remembered that the Jews of Asia were far more likely to recognize St. Paul than the Jews of Jerusalem, amongst whom he had not taught publicly for many years.

28. "Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people." No doubt they knew that he taught publicly and constantly the equality of all men in Christ—that the Jews were to be dispossessed of their exclusive position by the Gentiles being everywhere raised to be the people of God.

"And the law." No doubt they knew that he taught that the

further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city <sup>a</sup>Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

<sup>a</sup> ch. xx. 4. 30 And <sup>a</sup> all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

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law could not justify, but that justification must be by the faith of Christ.

“And this place.” No doubt they knew that he taught that the temple of God was a spiritual temple of living souls, and that an heavenly Jerusalem would take the place of the earthly.

“And further brought Greeks also into the temple,” &c.

29. “For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian . . . into the temple.” The Gentiles could only come into the outermost court. Between this and the more sacred part, into which Israelites only could enter, was, according to Josephus, a stone wall for a partition, with an inscription which forbade any foreigner to go in, under pain of death (Josephus, “Ant.” xv. xi. 5). It is very remarkable that one of the most valuable results of the Palestine Exploration Expedition has been the discovery of a slab of marble, with an inscription thus translated by M. Ganneau: “*No man of alien race is to enter within the balustrade and fence which goes round the temple. If anyone is taken in the act let him know that he has himself to blame for the penalty of death that follows.*” No doubt this was let into the very wall of partition, and because they had supposed that Paul had led Trophimus beyond this wall, they determined to put both to death.

30. “And all the city was moved, and the people ran together, and they took Paul,” &c. The worshippers in the temple would rush about the city in all directions, telling all they met that the chief enemy of the faith of Israel was caught, and would shortly receive the punishment he deserved.

“And drew him out of the temple.” No matter what their eagerness to shed his blood, the sanctity of the temple must be respected.

“And forthwith the doors were shut.” Lest there should be some pollution through the excitement of the people.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32 <sup>b</sup> Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xxli. 27.  
& xxiv. 7.

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

<sup>c</sup> ver. 11.  
ch. xx. 23.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

31, 32. "And as they went about to kill him . . . left beating of Paul." Tidings would soon reach the chief captain, inasmuch as the tower of Antonia, where the cohort was stationed, stood on the north-west corner of the temple, and communicated directly with it. As it was now the time of one of the great feasts, and the one most frequented by foreign Jews, the full force would be there to keep in order the fanatical crowds.

"They left beating of Paul." They had no weapons in their hands, or he would have been despatched long before the chief captain came to the rescue.

33, 34. "Then the chief captain drew near . . . carried into the castle."

"Commanded him to be bound with two chains." He was chained with chains, one fastened to each of his wrists, and to the wrist of a soldier on each side of him.

"And some cried one thing, some another." The writer of this, or the one that reported the scene to the writer, seems to have stuck very closely to St. Paul in this his hour of extreme danger. Such terms would not, we think, be used in describing the scene, except by one who had been present, and the whole description seems to be that of another than the Apostle himself.

35, 36. "And when he came upon the stairs . . . Away with

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

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying,

<sup>d</sup> Luke xxiii. <sup>e</sup> Away with him.

18. John xix.  
15. ch. xxii.  
22.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

This Egyptian  
rose A.D. 55.

<sup>e</sup> See ch. v. 36.

38 <sup>e</sup> Art not thou that Egyptian, which before

him." No sooner did the soldiers begin to retreat with their prisoner along the outer court to the stairs leading from the outer court to the roof of the cloister, which communicated with the castle of Antonia, than the people pressed after them with yells and execrations, "Away with him, away with him." At the foot of the stairs the pressure was so great, that the two soldiers to whom Paul was bound, were obliged to take him in their arms and carry him up.

"Away with him." The same words as those which they shouted against the Lord when they cried, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." All this scene is frightful, being such an exhibition of murderous hate; but we must remember that St. Paul was all the time, or at least after he became a Roman prisoner, in comparative safety. If he had been recognized in any part of Jerusalem any distance from the castle, he would have been, humanly speaking, long before this a murdered man.

37, 38. "And as Paul was to be led into the castle . . . Canst thou speak Greek?" The chief captain was surprised that St. Paul addressed him in his own language. He thought at first that he was some illiterate fanatic, but on hearing him speak the language of all educated men, he conjectured that he might be "that Egyptian" who had but a short time before given such trouble to the Roman governor. He seems to have named "that Egyptian," simply because he was the most dangerous rebel he knew of, and he surmised that a tumult such as that which now raged about them, must have been excited by the presence of no ordinary person.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following account of the Egyptian is given [by Josephus, "Ant." xx. viii. 6: "Moreover there came out of Egypt, about this time, to Jerusalem, one that said that he



these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, ' I am a man *which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city*: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. f ch. ix. 11. & xxii. 3.

40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and <sup>g</sup>beckoned with the hand g ch. xii. 17. unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

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"That were murderers." Properly, Sicarii, or dagger men—men armed with a short dagger, which they used effectually in tumults without much risk of discovery. These were the assassins who, in the siege of Jerusalem, played a part so destructive to the city, and were mainly the cause of the worst horrors of the siege.

39. "I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus . . . no mean city," &c. Commentators (Wordsworth, Blunt, Howson, &c.) cite an inscription on coins in which the city is called Metropolis Autonomos, signifying that it was the chief city of all that part of Asia Minor, and self-governed.

40. "And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs . . . in the Hebrew tongue." Not, of course, in the Hebrew of the Old Testament—that had been for many centuries a dead language, but in the Syro-Chaldaic, the vernacular of Palestine.

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was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at the distance of five furlongs. He said, further, that he would show them from thence, how at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall down, and he promised them that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls when they had fallen down. Now when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons, and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew 400 of them, and took 200 alive. But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, but did not appear any more."

## CHAP. XXII.

**M**EN, <sup>a</sup> brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you.

<sup>a</sup> ch. vii. 2.

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

<sup>b</sup> ch. xxi. 39.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. xi. 22.  
Phil. iii. 5.

3 <sup>b</sup> I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city <sup>c</sup> at the feet of <sup>d</sup> Gamaliel, and taught <sup>e</sup> according to the perfect manner of the law of the

<sup>c</sup> Deut. xxxiii.  
<sup>3</sup>. 2 Kings iv.  
35. Luke x. 39.  
<sup>4</sup> ch. v. 34.  
<sup>e</sup> ch. xxvi. 5.

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1. "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence," &c. This ought rather to be rendered, "brethren and fathers," the word "men" (*ἀνδρες*) applying to both.

"My defence," my apology. The word was afterwards adopted by early Christian writers as a name for a formal, written defence of the Christian religion.

2. "And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue," —*i. e.*, in the vernacular Aramaic. On account of his doing so, they would the more believe him to be one of themselves, and they might be led to think that using their language, he had so much in common with them as not to be hastily put down as inimical to their laws and customs.

3. "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia," &c. First of all he declares himself their fellow-countryman and co-religionist; then, it is true, he is obliged to say that he was born in Tarsus, a foreign and a Greek city; but on no account are they to look upon him as a Grecian, an Hellenist. On the contrary, he spent his youth and received his education in Jerusalem, at the feet of one of their most celebrated doctors, as his scholar.

"According to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." Rather, according to the strict manner of the law of the fathers—according to the accurate way in which the fathers understood and

fathers, and <sup>f</sup> was zealous toward God, <sup>g</sup> as ye all are this day.

4 <sup>h</sup> 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 <sup>i</sup> all the estate of the elders: <sup>k</sup> from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went

<sup>f</sup> ch. xxi. 20.

Gal. i. 14.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. x. 2.

<sup>h</sup> ch. viii. 3. &

xxvi. 9, 10, 11.

Phil. iii. 6.

<sup>i</sup> Tim. i. 13.

<sup>j</sup> Luke xxii. 66.

ch. iv. 5.

<sup>k</sup> ch. ix. 2. &

xxvi. 10, 12.

kept the law. The meaning is evidently the same as that of Acts xxvi. 5, "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

"And was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day." Notice how conciliatory the tone of this apology is. He brings forward how much they had in common. Thus in Rom. x. 2, speaking of the unconverted Jews, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God." And he was one of the foremost in the expression of this zeal: "I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. i. 14).

4. "And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons," &c. "This way." The way of the Gospel, the way of life.

Notice how he particularly mentions "women" as well as men, as showing the bitterness and virulence with which he pursued them, so that he would spare neither age nor sex.

5. "As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders," &c. The then High Priest, *i.e.*, at the time of this defence, was Ananias. The Emperors, on account of the very great influence and importance of the office, claimed the right of nominating whom they would to the high-priesthood, and Claudius had given this power to Herod Agrippa II., who had nominated this Ananias. St. Paul appeals to his witness, either because he was one of the Sanhedrim at the time of his conversion, and so would remember what its acts were, or because the High Priest for the time being must be acquainted with, and be able to refer to, the acts of his immediate predecessors.

"From whom also I received letters." The historian in the former account (ix. 1) mentions only the High Priest. Here we

to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

<sup>1</sup> ch. ix. 3. &  
xxvi. 12, 13.

6 And <sup>1</sup>it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

<sup>m</sup> Dan. x. 7.  
ch. ix. 7.

9 And <sup>m</sup>they that were with me saw indeed the

learn that the elders, or Sanhedrim, concurred in giving the letters.

“To Jerusalem, to be punished.” Not only with scourging, but with death: “When they were put to death, I gave my voice against them” (xxvi. 10).

6. “And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus,” &c. I have, on Acts ix. 1-20, commented so fully on the account of St. Paul’s conversion, that I can only now refer the reader to my notes on the historian St. Luke’s narrative there, and shall merely now notice in passing in what this account from the Apostle’s lips differs from, or adds to, the former narrative. The Apostle here (and in xxvi. 13) tells us that it was noon, so that a light at that time of day, which struck him to the ground and blinded him, must have been beyond measure vivid and penetrating.

“A great light.” St. Luke speaks of it as a light; the Apostle who had experience of it and was blinded by it, as a *great* light.

7, 8. “And I fell to the ground . . . Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.” We gather from this that the Lord said, “I am Jesus of *Nazareth*.” The word *Nazoraios*, probably, is not in the historian’s account, though some MSS. interpolate it there from this place.

9. “And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid,” &c. In xxvi. 14, St. Paul says that they “were all fallen to the earth.” Here he says that they saw the light but heard not the voice, though in Acts ix. it is said, “They heard a voice, but

light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And <sup>a</sup> one Ananias, a devout man according <sup>a</sup> ch. ix. 17. to the law, <sup>o</sup> having a good report of all the <sup>p</sup> Jews <sup>o</sup> ch. x. 22. which dwelt *there*, <sup>p</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 7.

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother

9. "And were afraid." So D., E., L., P., most Cursives, &c.; but N., A., B., H., a few Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, &c., omit the words.

saw no man." No doubt they heard the voice but could not distinguish the words.

10, 11. "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? . . . I came into Damascus." Commentators notice how plainly we have here the evidence of one present as the chief actor, if one may so say, in the scene; for he connects the blindness with the overpowering brightness, "When I could not see for the glory of that light."

12. "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report," &c. Nothing more is said by the historian in ix. 10, respecting Ananias than that he was a disciple. Here St. Paul, evidently with the view of conciliating his hearers, describes the man who admitted him into the Church as "a devout man according to the law," *i.e.*, he was not only a devout Christian but a devout Jew as well, and also looked up to as such by all the Jews of the city; so careful was the Lord that in all the circumstances of St. Paul's conversion there should be nothing to give needless offence, but everything to attract and win over the chosen people.

13. "Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight," &c. St. Paul says nothing respecting the vision to Ananias, because, if so, he would have to have reported that the

Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

q ch. iii. 13.  
& v. 30.

r ch. ix. 15.  
& xxvi. 16.

\* 1 Cor. ix. 1.  
& xv. 8.

t ch. iii. 14.  
& vii. 52.

u 1 Cor. xi. 23.  
Gal. i. 12.

v ch. xxiii. 11.

w ch. iv. 20.  
& xxvi. 16.

14 And he said, "The God of our fathers" hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and "see" that Just One, and "shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of" what thou has seen and heard.

Lord in that vision had said to him, "He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," putting the Gentiles before the children of Israel. This, he thought, they would not bear, at least at that time, and so he put off the declaration of the unpopular truth till he could describe it as coming from the Lord's own lips, and after he had made many efforts to evangelize his own fellow countrymen.

14. "And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will," &c. The declared will of God was that men should believe in His Son (John vi. 40), that Son Who was as to His human nature emphatically called the Just One, and this involved the truth of all His claims, for if God by raising Him from the dead, proclaimed Him to be just, then He proclaimed Him to be truthful, indeed the Truth. And so all that He had said respecting God being His very Father, and Himself His true Son, doing all the things that the Father did, and so putting Himself on an equality with God, was the very truth. These words of Ananias are somewhat differently reported by the historian St. Luke, but when examined both reports of what Ananias said correspond perfectly to one another. Ananias first said what we have here, and then he would proceed to say, "that Just One Who was seen of thee, and Whose words thou didst hear, is the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee as thou camest; He hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (ix. 17).

15. "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." He naturally omits the reference to the Gentiles, and puts his general commission in the broadest form "thou shalt be his witness to all men." This, of course, did not

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

<sup>a</sup> ch. ii. 38.  
 Heb. x. 22.  
<sup>a</sup> ch. ix. 14.  
 Rom. x. 13.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. ix. 26.  
 2 Cor. xii. 2.

17 And <sup>b</sup>it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

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16. "On the name of the Lord." So H., L., P., and most Cursives; but M., A., B., E., about ten Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Copt., Arm., Æth., read, "on his name."

exclude his mission to the children of Israel, to whom, in every city of the Gentiles, he first proclaimed the Gospel.

16. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," &c. Saul had deeply repented, he had been converted. He had seen the Lord with a sight which qualified him for Apostleship. He was chosen and preordained to be the Apostle of the Gentile world: and yet his sins were not cleansed away till he had submitted to receive the sacrament of initiation into the Church. For reasons which in their entirety are known only to Himself, the Lord has laid very marked emphasis on the reception of the two great Sacraments of the Gospel, Baptism and the Eucharist. In His last commission to His Apostles, He mentions Baptism as essential. In the first Christian sermon on the day of Pentecost, the condition of salvation is "Repent and be baptized." And no writer of the New Testament has been commissioned to bring out this position of Baptism more prominently than St. Paul. If his Epistle to the Romans contains a sketch of the plan of salvation on its human side, then Holy Baptism from its place in chapter vi. is a part of that plan. We must fall in with the Lord's mind. We must have faith, real energizing faith, in the Sacraments as embodying the promises of God. As our Catechism says, "Faith, whereby we steadfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that Sacrament."

"Calling on the name of the Lord," i.e., invoking the presence and power of the Lord to be with His Institution.

17, 18. "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem . . . concerning me." "When I was come again to Jerusalem," i.e., at the time indicated in ix. 29, 30: "And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him, which, when the brethren

18 And <sup>c</sup> saw him saying unto me, <sup>d</sup> Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

<sup>c</sup> ver. 14.  
<sup>d</sup> Matt. x. 14.

19 And I said, Lord, <sup>e</sup> they know that I imprisoned and <sup>f</sup> beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

<sup>e</sup> ver. 4. ch. viii. 3.  
<sup>f</sup> Matt. x. 17.

20 <sup>g</sup> And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and <sup>h</sup> consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

<sup>g</sup> ch. vii. 58.

<sup>h</sup> Luke xi. 48.  
ch. viii. 1.  
Rom. i. 32.

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20. "And consenting unto his death." So H., L., P., most Cursives, &c.; but M., A., B., E., Vulg., Sah., Copt., Æth., omit "unto his death."

knew they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus." This external action on the part of the Church corresponds to the internal vision in the temple. It is very doubtful whether St. Paul would have quitted any sphere of work, because of mere opposition and danger to his life. It was, no doubt, the vision which decided his action.

"Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem." This most probably refers to the going about of the Jews to kill him.

"In a trance." Notice how St. Paul distinguishes between the actual appearance of the Lord, and His appearance in the trance. In the trance there was no outward physical effect whatsoever—by the actual appearance he was struck to the ground and blinded.

19. "And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned," &c. This seems to have been said to move the Lord to grant him more time in Jerusalem. "They know how I persecuted those who held the way of life. They will surely ask how it could have come about that I preached the faith which once I destroyed, and will be induced to listen to me;" or perhaps without any view to such consequences he desired to make some atonement by preaching in the very place in which he had persecuted so bitterly, and incurring all the odium that might be cast upon him for his apostasy.

20. "And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen," &c. Rather of thy "witness." The word in the earliest stage had not yet become fixed as belonging only to those who had laid down their lives for the truth to which they witnessed. It is the same word as is translated "witness" in verse 15.



21 And he said unto me, Depart: 'for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, <sup>k</sup> Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that <sup>l</sup> he should live.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

<sup>l</sup> ch. ix. 15. & xiii. 2, 46, 47. & xviii. 6. & xxvi. 17. Rom. i. 5. & xi. 13. & xv. 16. Gal. i. 15, 16. & ii. 7, 8. Eph. iii. 7, 8. 1 Tim. ii. 7. 2 Tim. i. 11.  
<sup>k</sup> ch. xxi. 36.  
<sup>l</sup> ch. xxv. 24.

21. "And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence," &c. Much of this seems to have been said then to convince them that St. Paul did not of his own accord seek to evangelize the Gentiles, but that it was laid upon him by Christ Himself.

22. "And they gave him audience unto this word," &c. The idea that the long looked for Messiah was no other than the Man Whom they had crucified, that He was now in glory at the right hand of God, that He showed Himself in vision in the temple itself, and that He had appeared and personally converted this man to send him to the Gentiles, in order to raise these unclean outcasts to the level of themselves, was more than they could bear.

23. "And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air," &c. These violent gestures have been by some thought to express their desire to stone him, if they could but get at him, but Chardin (quoted in notes by F. M.) says, "When complaint is made to a governor, the Orientals get as many friends as they can together before his house with piercing cries, tearing their garments, and throwing up dust." That throwing up dust was a sign among the Jews of uncontrollable passion is evident from the conduct of Shimei in the presence of David (2 Sam. xvi. 13).

24. "The chief captain commanded him to be brought . . . examined by scourging." That is, by being scourged till he confessed what was supposed to be the truth. It would be more consonant to our ideas of justice that a few of the excited mob should have been submitted to the infliction till they should tell why they

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto <sup>m</sup> ch. xvi. 37. the centurion that stood by, <sup>m</sup> Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

26. "Take heed what thou doest." So D., H.; but N, A., B., C., E., Vulg., Syriac, &c., "What art thou about to do?"

exhibited such rage, but in all probability Lysias understood not one word of St. Paul's defence, and observing that what he had said in no way quieted them, but rather the contrary, he concluded that he must have committed some very great crime.

25. "And as they bound him with thongs," &c. The Revisers render, "And when they had tied him up with the thongs," i.e., ready to be scourged.

"Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge?" &c. For the unlawfulness of scourging or torturing a Roman citizen, see note and footnote on xvi. 38, and for further citations from Roman Law, Lewin, vol. ii., page 147.

26, 27, 28. "When the centurion heard that, he went and told . . . . But I was free born."

"Take heed what thou doest;" rather, perhaps, what art thou about to do?

"With a great sum obtained I this freedom." That the citizenship of Rome was commonly sold about this time, see Dio Cassius, lx. 17. Lysias, from his name, was no doubt a Greek, and on obtaining by purchase the freedom of Rome, took the name of Claudius. The freedom of Rome once fetched a high price; afterwards, when Messalina and Narcissus made sale of it, it was obtained for the veriest trifle. It is conjectured from this that Lysias had obtained it many years before this, when it was of much more value. The word *πολιτεία*, here translated freedom, is

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have || examined him: and the chief captain also | <sup>Or, tortured him.</sup> was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the Chief Priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

properly "citizenship." A man before he obtained the *πολιτεία* was not a slave, but an alien, and by his enrolment as a citizen obtained the rights and immunities belonging to citizens.

"And Paul said, But I was *free* born," rather, as Revisers translate, "I was a Roman born," "I was born a citizen of Rome."

29. "Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him." "Examined him," that is, by torture. He was now treated with the consideration due to a Roman citizen, but was still, of course, a prisoner, being secured by a chain from the right hand to a soldier's left.

"Was afraid . . . because he had bound him," *i.e.*, bound him, with the view of torturing him.

30. "On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty," &c. As the delegate of the Procurator he had power to summon the Sanhedrim. The council, or Sanhedrim, consisting of the priestly heads of the courses, twenty-four elders, and twenty-four scribes, or doctors, in all seventy-two, originally met in a room in the Temple called Gazith, but as the Roman emperors had granted to the Jews that any stranger or heathen who passed the sacred limits might instantly be put to death, it was considered unsafe to allow them to deliberate in a place not under Roman surveillance. So they were moved down to a council room just without the Temple, adjoining the western cloister. (From Lewin.)

## CHAP. XXIII.

**A**ND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, <sup>a</sup> I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

<sup>a</sup> ch. xxiv. 16.

<sup>1</sup> Cor. iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cor. i. 12. &

iv. 2. <sup>2</sup> Tim.

i. 3. Heb. xiii.

18.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Kings xxii.

24. Jer. xx. 2.

John xviii. 22.

2 And the High Priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him <sup>b</sup> to smite him on the mouth.

1. "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council," &c. Some suppose that he looked upon them with that "strained gaze" with which one would regard them who was short-sighted, or of defective vision, which is supposed to have been his "thorn in the flesh," and which he had suffered from ever since the blinding vision near Damascus. It seems to me, however, to mean that he looked them steadily in the face as one conscious of innocence—as one who had nothing to be ashamed of—nothing to fear from them, but who by faith and hope had been raised to a sphere above them, and would regard them as one only could do who, by God's grace, had received a knowledge of God infinitely above what the wisest of them had as yet attained to.

"I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." Whether as an unconverted or a converted Jew, he had lived in all good conscience. He had all his life "exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men." When he persecuted the Christians he thought that he ought—that it was his duty—to "do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," and when God was pleased to convert and enlighten him, then from that moment he thought that he ought to devote his life to the furtherance of the Gospel of the same Jesus, and he did so. Was, then, his unconverted state a sinful one? Yes, because he had not taken the proper steps to enlighten his conscience. He obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly, but still his ignorance was sinful, for it was in his power to ascertain the truth.

2. "And the High Priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him," &c. This man was Ananias, the son of Nebedeus (Joseph.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou whited wall*: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and <sup>c</sup>commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? c Lev. xix. 35.  
Deut. xxv. 1, 2.  
John vii. 51.

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's High Priest?

5 Then said Paul, <sup>d</sup>I wist not, brethren, that d ch. xxiv. 17.

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Ant., xx. 5, 2). He had been sent prisoner to Rome by Quadratus, A.D. 52, to be tried before Claudius. He had apparently been acquitted, and had returned to Jerusalem, and was for eleven years the acting high priest. A little after this, *i. e.*, just before the departure of Felix, he was succeeded by Ismael, the son of Phabi. His miserable end, as related by Josephus, seems to be a just retribution for the encouragement he evidently gave to the Jews, who would have killed Paul. The house in which he had taken refuge was besieged, and having hid himself in an aqueduct in the gardens, he was dragged out and assassinated by the Sicarii.

3. "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou whited wall*," &c. This was a burst of righteous indignation against so flagrant an act of cruelty and injustice. If a whited wall means an hypocrite, then he richly deserved the appellation, for he was sitting in the Theocratic Judgment Seat to act in God's stead in the administration of His law, and by this act of insolent tyranny he showed his contempt of all law. The words of St. Paul are the words of one who had on many other occasions maintained his rights as a citizen against illegal usage. They were not an atom too strong, just as the words of St. Peter to Simon Magus (Acts viii. 20, 23), and the words of Paul himself to Elymas (xiii. 9-10) were only what described their state.

4, 5. "And they that stood by said, Revilest thou . . . the ruler of thy people." There has been much difference of opinion as to the meaning of the words, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest." Some, and amongst them Jerome, who is followed by Bishop Wordsworth, suppose that St. Paul, in saying "God shall smite thee, *thou whited wall*," forgot himself, and "spake unadvisedly with his lips"—that this was his infirmity, and that his conduct in this matter stands in strong contrast with the combined patience and dignity of his Divine Master, Who

he was the High Priest: for it is written, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

• Ex. xxii. 28.

Eccles. x. 20.

2 Pet. ii. 10.

Jude 8.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part

when smitten by one of the minions of the High Priest, said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me?" So that when St. Paul said, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest," he in fact apologised, and "I wist not" must be taken to mean, "I did not sufficiently consider that he was the High Priest." This may be the meaning, but I think in this case the Apostle would rather have said, "I did not remember; in the heat of my temper I forgot that he was the High Priest. The natural meaning of the words *οὐκ ᾔδειν* is, "I knew not," and they would certainly have been so understood by those who now heard them.

I most firmly believe that St. Paul did not know the High Priest. Why should he? he had in all probability never seen him. He had been living away from Jerusalem for years, and the functions of the priesthood with which he had to do, as in his release from his vows, would be performed by very inferior sacerdotal persons indeed. It is alleged that the High Priest must have been in an elevated seat—must have had on his white robes, must have been by far the best known and most conspicuous man in the assembly. To which it is answered that the council was summoned apparently at a moment's notice—that there was, in all probability, no time for them to put on their official robes, that it was not held in the Gazith, or official place in the temple, but in some place under Roman surveillance; that St. Paul heard a command given, but did not know from whom it proceeded—all these things must be taken into account, so that very probably the Apostle did not apologize, but said what was strictly true when he said, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest." Again, let it be remembered that if the meeting was, as we say, a special one, called in haste, perhaps half the members would not be present—how, then, was St. Paul to know that the president was the actual High Priest? He was not bound to be there if he had no more than perhaps an hour's notice. All this makes it still more likely that when St. Paul said "I knew not" he stated the actual fact.

6. "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other," &c. This has been misunderstood, as if St. Paul,

were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, *Men and brethren, 'I am a Pharisee,* ' ch. xxvi. 5. Phil. iii. 5.

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suddenly perceiving an opening for causing a schism amongst the members of the council, took advantage of it, in what we should call a smart and clever way; but such seems to me not to be at all the true account of the matter. St. Paul was not brought before the council to answer any specific accusation respecting his disturbing the peace and raising tumult; but that Lysias might know the cause wherefore they accused him. This would inevitably lead to the question, "Why did St. Paul preach and gather such a following?" and the answer would be because he had seen, or thought he had seen, the Lord, and had received a direct commission from Him to evangelize the Gentiles. This would at once raise the question of the whole dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, whether there could be any resurrection as an objective fact—whether there was any invisible world, whether there was an eternal justice, and so a state of retribution? This, if they investigated St. Paul's history and conduct, must come up very soon in the examination, and must divide the assembly, if it consisted of two sects which made the belief in and the denial of the Resurrection their respective watchwords.

For it is ever to be remembered that the Resurrection of the Lord was not a subordinate feature of St. Paul's teaching, but its head and front. The popular view of him (encouraged by those who ought to know better) is that he preached little except an abstract doctrine of justification, founded on the impossibility of human merit, and the legal or forensic idea of imputed righteousness, whereas his view of justification was founded on the actual truth of the Lord's Resurrection, and could not exist apart from it. The Lord was "delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25); our justification is justification of LIFE (Rom. v. 18), and we are saved by His Life (Rom. v. 10). Our faith is ultimately fixed on God the Father, not as bringing Him under death, but as raising Him from the dead (Rom. iv. 24). The Resurrection of Christ was to Paul the power of Christ—"that I may know him and the power of his resurrection." So that Christ raised from the dead was the one feature of St. Paul's preaching, to which all else was subordinate.

And as it was the leading feature of St. Paul's preaching, so it

the son of a Pharisee: "of the hope and resurrection of

the dead I am called in question.

κ ch. xxiv. 15,  
21. & xxvi. 6.  
& xxviii. 20.

6 "The son of a Pharisee." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Sah., Copt., Arm., Æth.: but N., A., B., C., 13, 15, 36, 40, 81, 126, 130, Vulg., Syriac, read, "the son of Pharisees."

was the leading doctrine of the Pharisees as distinguished not only from the Sadducees, but from the general run of the Jews. This we gather not only from verse 8, but from the account of the sect in Josephus's Ant., xviii. 3, 4. Now when St. Paul interposed with "I am a Pharisee, of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question," he did not throw in, as one may say, an apple of discord, but he reminded the court of what had come to be the real issue, which was the truth of the Resurrection. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain. If Christ be risen, then there is a good reason for all my change of life, all my preaching, all my journeyings, all my self-denials."

Before St. Paul made this appeal, matters had taken a turn; it was no longer the question of the tumult, but the higher question between the holders of the Resurrection and its deniers, as any one who knew the theological positions of the three parties, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and St. Paul, might have foretold.

Then St. Paul at once, with perfect good faith and propriety, put in his word, "I am a Pharisee," *i. e.*, quoad the matter in dispute between you of the court. "The son of a Pharisee." "It is no new truth with me, but an hereditary one, if respecting the resurrection I am called in question." This was true. The hatred of the Sadducees, both towards our Lord and His servant, was far more deepseated and virulent than that of the Pharisees—the question between him and the Pharisees was a trifle to that between him and the Sadducees. The Pharisees differed from him respecting the mission of Christ, and the obligations of the law on the Gentiles; the Sadducees differed from him and the Pharisees respecting so infinitely great a matter as the power and justice of God—His power to raise the dead, and His justice in rewarding or punishing them when so raised. Another matter is to be remembered. If St. Paul was a sincere Pharisee, holding the creed of the Pharisees, then his controversy with the followers of Jesus was not by any means his first controversy, for from his youth he had opposed



7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 <sup>h</sup> For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

<sup>h</sup> Matt. xxii. 23. Mark xii. 13. Luke xx. 27.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, <sup>l</sup> We find no evil in this man: but <sup>k</sup> if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, <sup>l</sup> let us not fight against God.

<sup>l</sup> ch. xxv. 25. & xxvi. 31.  
<sup>k</sup> ch. xxii. 7, 17, 19.  
<sup>l</sup> ch. v. 39.

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9. "And the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part." So only a few Cursives; but M, B., C., and several Cursives, read, "and certain of the scribes which were," &c.

Sadduceeism, and the fire of the early disputant on the side of God's power and willingness to raise the dead burst forth. He saw before him his oldest theological foes, and in a moment he joined in the fray.

7. "And when he had so said, there arose a dissension," &c. There was all the fuel for the flames ready, and St. Paul's single word ignited it.

8. "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit," &c. How, then, could the Sadducees get over the appearance of angels in the Pentateuch? No doubt in the same way in which some amongst us, holding office in our Church, get over the appearances of the risen Lord in the Gospel—that all such seeming appearances were subjective visions, having no outward reality, but were the effect of disordered imaginations.

9. "And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part," &c. Was this conviction on the part of the Pharisees' scribes permanent? Certainly not. But as is very often the case their theological heat blinded them for the time to everything else. They welcomed for the moment St. Paul as an ally, and a very valuable one, for if he had actually seen a risen man, there was an end of the controversy. But, no doubt, as soon as they cooled, and dispassionately reflected on the matter, they would see that to accept the Resurrection of Jesus involved the reception of Him as the Messiah of God, they would think again of it, and so nothing came of their momentary acquittal of the Apostle.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

≡ ch. xviii. 9.  
 & xxvii. 23, 24.

11 And <sup>≡</sup> the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

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11. "Be of good cheer, Paul." So C.<sup>s</sup>, H., L., P., and most Cursives; but N, A., B., C\*, E., about ten Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt., &c., omit "Paul."

10. "And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain . . . bring him into the castle." We get from this some slight idea of the state of disorder in Jerusalem for some years before its overthrow. This display of violent passion, be it remembered, took place in the principal ecclesiastical assembly of the chosen people.

"To go down," *i.e.*, from the tower of Antonia, which commanded the Temple, "into the castle"—perhaps into the very hall in which our Lord was made the sport of the brutal soldiers.

11. "And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer." This seems to stamp the approval of the Lord upon all his previous course—upon his neglect of the various prophecies which would have kept him away from Jerusalem, upon his taking the advice of James and the elders, upon his conduct in the hall of the Sanhedrim.

"As thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem." The Lord would not have said this unless He had approved of his witness.

"So must thou bear witness also at Rome." He would have yet to bear witness before the great ones, Felix, Festus, Agrippa, in Judæa, and in like manner before the great ones at Rome, perhaps before Cæsar himself. He especially needed this consolation with reference to the prophecies of Agabus and others. They spake, it is true, by the Spirit, but so as simply to warn him of coming danger; he resolved in the same Spirit to brave the danger for the sake of the Lord's Name. The Lord now assured him that he need have no misgiving as to whether he had done what was right.

12-15. "And when it was day . . . we, or ever he come near

12 And when it was day, <sup>a</sup> certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves || under a curse, a ver. 21, 30. ch. xxv. 3. saying that they would neither eat nor drink till || Or, with an oath of execration. they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

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12. "Certain of the Jews." So H., L., P., most Cursives, Sah., Syriac, Vulg.; but M, A., B., C., E., Copt., Arm., Æth., read, "the Jews"—"the Jews banded together."

are ready to kill him." And now comes by far the most formidable danger of all—a conspiracy in which above forty men were implicated, who determined, under a curse, not to taste food till they had killed the Apostle. They were to lie in wait for him somewhere on the way between the tower and the judgment hall, perhaps within a part of the Temple itself, or they were to assemble in the court as spectators, and there set upon him and despatch him instantly, believing that they would be doing God service by ridding the world of such an enemy of Israel. Incredible though it seems, they went to the chief priests and elders, and desired that they would move the chief captain to send him again to the council, with the view of making further inquiries, and then, when only a very few soldiers were guarding him, they would set upon him, murder him, and make their escape. The priests and elders evidently closed with this offer, for they kept it secret from the chief captain. It, however, reached his ears in time to save Paul from their violence, for we read:

16-18. "And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait he went . . . to say unto thee." Of this nephew of Paul, or

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to ask me?

° ver. 12. 20 And he said, °The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow

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20. "As though they would inquire." So many Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Sah., Arm.; but N, A., B., E., H., L., P., 10, 13, 28, 40, 61, 97, 101, Copt., Æth., read, "As though thou wouldest inquire."

of his mother, we know nothing. He may not have been even a believer, but knowing well the holiness and integrity of his uncle, he could not endure the thought that he should perish by the hands of assassins. It is probable that if he had been known to be a Christian, care would have been taken that not the slightest whisper of the conspiracy should have reached his ears. Though Paul had been assured by the Lord that he should be in no danger of his life in Judæa, he regarded the Lord's promise as in no way relieving him from taking the proper precautions, so, as soon as he heard from his nephew of the intended crime, he determined to acquaint Lysias with it.

19. "Then the chief captain took him by the hand." The courtesy of Lysias is here to be noticed. His evident regard for Paul extended itself to all connected with him. He took his nephew by the hand that he might learn the reason for his visit. The reader will remember, how in a note on ch. xix., 31, I drew attention to the fact that the open, candid, gentle bearing of the Apostle won him the regard of all those in high places with whom he came in contact.

20, 21, 22. "And he said, the Jews have agreed to desire thee," &c. Having received the communication, the chiliarch, who was evidently exceedingly anxious about the safety of Paul, as being

into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearman two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

not only a Roman citizen, but as one who had impressed him with his goodness and holiness of character, desired him to keep the matter as secret as possible, and so to take no measures of his own, as he himself would see to the safety of his relative.

23, 24. "And he called unto him two centurions, saying, make ready two hundred soldiers," *i.e.*, foot, or legionaries, "seventy horsemen," that is, heavy cavalry, and two hundred lancers or light cavalry.

"And provide them beasts," *i.e.*, horses or mules (*κρήνη, jumenta*), to carry Paul. So that here were 470 soldiers for the protection of this one man. This seems to imply that the fears of Lysias were thoroughly roused by the excitement which the mere presence of Paul had caused, first in the temple, then in the council, and afterwards among the people, as shown by the number of the conspirators. He could find no adequate reason for so astonishing a ferment, and no doubt he earnestly desired to get rid of him, as his garrison was scarcely sufficient to quell tumults which might break out with such suddenness.

25-30. "And he wrote a letter after this manner . . . what they

26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix *sendeth* greeting.

p ch. xxi. 33.  
& xxiv. 7.

27 <sup>p</sup> This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

q ch. xxii. 30.

28 <sup>q</sup> And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

r ch. xxviii. 15.  
& xxv. 19.  
s ch. xxvi. 31.

29 Whom I perceived to be accused <sup>r</sup> of questions of their law, <sup>s</sup> but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

had against him. Farewell." "Unto the most excellent governor" (*επαριστω*, the same word as that with which St. Luke addresses Theophilus)—a singularly inappropriate salutation, as Felix was a cruel tyrant and abandoned profligate. This Felix was originally a slave with his brother Pallas in the household of Antonia, the mother of Claudius. Pallas became the favourite of the emperor, and procured for his brother Felix the procuratorship of Judæa. He is described by Tacitus as exercising the power of a tyrant in the temper of a slave. "Felix per omnem sævitiam ac libidinem, jus regium servili ingenio exercuit." (Tacitus, Hist., v. ix. 6.) He once employed the Sicarii for his own purposes, to bring about the murder of the High Priest Jonathan. (Joseph. Ant., xx. 8, 5.)

"Then came I with an army [or troop], and rescued him, having understood," &c. Upon this Bishop Wordsworth remarks, "It was true that Claudius Lysias had rescued Paul after he had ascertained that he was a Roman (see xxii. 29, xxiii. 10). It is also true that he had rescued him before he knew that he was a Roman (xxii. 25). But it was not true that he had rescued him because he knew that he was a Roman, and that he then brought him to the council. The incidents mentioned are true, but not in the order in which they are recorded; and they are so stated as to obviate the charge, that he had bound and put him to examination; and so they afford strong evidence of the genuineness of the document."

29, 30. "Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their

30 And <sup>t</sup>when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and <sup>t</sup>ver. 20.  
 "gave commandment to his accusers also to say <sup>u</sup>ch. xxiv. 8.  
 before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell. <sup>& xxv. 6.</sup>

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle :

33 Who, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of <sup>\*</sup>Cilicia : <sup>e</sup> ch. xxi. 39.

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30. "And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man." N, A., B., E., and some Cursives, read, "And when it was shewn to me that there would be a plot against the man."

"Farewell." So N, E., L., most Cursives, Syriac, Arm.; omitted by A., B., Vulg. (Amiat.), Sah., and Copt.

law, but to have nothing laid," &c. Of these questions Lysias would of course be profoundly ignorant. He heard violent altercations respecting the profanation of the temple, the admission of Gentiles without circumcision into the religious state and position of the Jews, the assertion of a Resurrection as shown by the Resurrection of a celebrated Teacher. No matter how clearly such things were proved against the prisoner, they could not subject him to such a punishment as death, they could not bring him in "worthy of bonds."

31. "Then the soldiers . . . brought him by night to Antipatris." About thirty-five miles from Jerusalem, and twenty-six from Cæsarea. Built by Herod, and called Antipatris after his father Antipater.

32. "On the morrow they left the horsemen . . . returned to the castle." He was now out of all danger, and could be well protected by the seventy horsemen for the remainder of the way.

33, 34. "Who when they came to Cæsarea . . . and when he understood that he was of Cilicia." A difficulty has been made respecting his conduct in this matter. If he found St. Paul was of Cilicia why did he not at once remit him to the governor of that

35 'I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also  
7 ch. xxiv. 1,  
 16. & xxv. 18.  
 \* Matt. xxvii.  
 27. come. And he commanded him to be kept in  
 \* Herod's judgment hall.

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province? Evidently because he desired to know whether there were any real grounds for the accusations against him, for it seemed ridiculous to send him to another governor on such paltry, or rather unintelligible, grounds as are indicated in the letter of Lysias.

35. "I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come . . . judgment hall." "Judgment hall," rather *Prætorium*. This had been built by Herod as a royal residence, and now was occupied by the governor. A part of it was seemingly set apart for state prisoners. The mention of it shows that St. Paul was not committed to some common jail, but treated as a prisoner of distinction.

#### CHAP. XXIV.

AND after <sup>a</sup> five days <sup>b</sup> Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

a ch. xxi. 27.  
 b ch. xxiii. 2,  
 30, 35. & xxv. 2.

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1. "And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders," &c. This "five days" probably begins with the night of St. Paul's journey from Jerusalem to Cæsarea. "With a certain orator" (*rhetor*, rhetorician). The *caussidicus* of the Roman courts. Though bearing a Roman name, this man seems to have been a Jew, for he speaks in verse 6 of "our law." It has been inferred, from the name of Tertullus being Latin, and a diminutive of Tertius, that the proceedings were in Latin, but that is very unlikely. "Certainly in ancient times the Romans had attempted to enforce the use of Latin in all law courts, and interpreters were employed, but the experiment failed, and under the Emperors trials were permitted in Greek, even in Rome itself." (Lewin.)



2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

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2. "Very worthy deeds are done." So H., L., P., and most Cursives," reading *κατορθωμάτων*; but N, A., B., E., and a few Cursives, read, "amendments" or "re-formations" (*διορθωμάτων*).

"Informed the governor against Paul," i. e., in the language of our law courts, "indicted him."

2. "And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that," &c. The speech is very clever, and begins with skilfully flattering Felix on the only point of his administration for which he deserved the smallest credit, viz., his putting down the Sicarii, or assassins.

"We enjoy great quietness." Dean Plumptre gives a remarkable testimony to this "quietness" from Tacitus, Ann., xii. 54. After narrating the disturbances caused by a quarrel between Felix, backed by the Samaritans, and Ventidius Cumanus, who had been appointed governor of Galilee, he ends his statement by saying that Felix was supported by Quadratus, the president of Syria, and "quiet was restored to the province" (*et quies provinciæ reddita*).

"And that very worthy deeds are done." The older MSS. read this as "reformations are being wrought;" Vulgate, "*et multa corrigantur*." This, from all accounts of contemporary historians, was grossly false. The Jews very shortly after accused him to Nero of insufferable tyranny, and he owed his escape to the interest of his brother Pallas (Jos. Ant., xx., 8, 5-9; Tac. Hist., v. 9; Ann., xii., 54).

"By thy providence." The use of this word, *προνοία*, is cited as another instance of the most shameless flattery. The term appears on the coins of the Deified Emperors, and is here given to a freedman, the governor under another governor, of a part of a remote province.

8, 4. "We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix,

5 ° For we have found this man *a pestilent fellow*, and  
c Luke xliii. 2. ch. vi. 18. & xvii. 20. & xxvi. 6. & xxi. 28. a mover of sedition among all the Jews through-  
1 Pet. ii. 12, 18. out the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the  
 Nazarenes :

6 ° Who also hath gone about to profane the  
d ch. xxi. 28. e John xviii. 31. temple : whom we took, and would ° have judged  
 according to our law.

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6. "And would have judged according to our law . . . to come unto thee" (verse 8). The whole of this passage to the words, "to come unto thee," is omitted by N, A., B., H., L., P., above forty Cursives, Vulg. (Amiat., first hand); but retained by E., many Cursives, and Syriac.

. . . clemency a few words," that "I be not further tedious unto thee." Some have said that Felix here shewed some signs of impatience under such absurd adulation, which brought Tertullus at once to the point.

5. "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition." "A pestilent fellow," literally a pestilence.

"A mover of sedition among all the Jews." The leading accusation against him was that he taught the Jews everywhere to forsake the law of Moses and to cast aside the traditions of their fathers, as being

"A ringleader of the sect [or heresy] of the Nazarenes." This is the only place where Christians are so called. They are still called by this name by Jews and Mahometans. The Jews, of course, would not call them Christians, because that would be allowing that their founder was the Christ.

6. "Who hath also gone about to profane the temple: whom we took and would have judged," &c. The Jews had raised a cry against St. Paul that he actually had profaned the temple by bringing therein the uncircumcised Greek Trophimus. This would have at once condemned St. Paul to death, but as the accusation was a palpable falsehood, and had not been persevered in by the Jews, it is here modified by Tertullus into "hath gone about to profane the temple."

"Whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias," &c. A part of these three verses is not found in many of the older MSS. and versions. I shall, however, treat it as if it formed a part of the text, and have given in the note above authorities for its insertion or omission.

7 'But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, f ch. xxi. 33.

8 'Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. s ch. xxiii. 30.

9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

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9. "Assented." So a few Cursives; but N, A., B., E., H., L., P., and many Cursives, read, "joined in the attack, or charge."

Assuming, then, that it forms a part of the text, we notice that the enmity of those who employed Tertullus had extended itself to Lysias, because of his evident partiality for the Apostle and determination to preserve his life from assassination.

Tertullus is hired to say, "whom we took, and would have judged according to our law," which is untrue. Certain Jews of Asia caught him in the temple, the high priests and elders hearing nothing about it till he was safe in Roman custody, when they took the part of the mob, and affected to believe in the cry of the Jews of Asia, which was the cause of the tumult.

7. "But the chief captain Lysias came upon us . . . out of our hands," &c. This was also untrue. The chief captain used no violence. As soon as ever they saw the soldiers they left beating of Paul. The only violence in the case was that with which Paul was threatened by Lysias himself, before he understood that he was a Roman.

8. "Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest," &c. If the doubtful part of these verses is to be rejected, then the "of whom" refers probably to St. Paul, and is by some understood to suggest that he should be examined by torture. If, on the contrary, the doubtful words are to be retained, then it refers to Claudius Lysias, which is probable from the words of Felix in verse 22, "when Lysias the chief captain shall come down I will know the uttermost of your matter."

9. "And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so," or if we adopt another reading, the Jews also assailed him, joining their voices with that of Tertullus, and not merely quietly assenting.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself :

Anno  
DOMINI  
58.  
*Felix made  
procurator  
over Judæa.*

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem <sup>h</sup> for to worship.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 17. ch.  
xxi. 26.

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10. "The more cheerfully" (εὐθυμότερον). So H., L., P., and most Cursives; but N, A., B., E., some Cursives, Vulg., and versions, read, "cheerfully" only (εὐθύμως).

10. "Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him," &c.

"Of many years," usually reckoned to have been six, which may be called many years, when compared with the average term (two years and a half) of Roman governors between Pontius Pilate and the destruction of Jerusalem. It is, however, probable that he had held office among the Jewish people for a much longer term, for Tacitus speaks of him as governor of Samaria when Cumanus was procurator of Judæa.

During this time he must have gained such a knowledge of Jewish affairs that St. Paul could speak without flattery when he appeals to his experience as giving him (St. Paul) confidence in pleading before him.

11. "Because that thou mayest understand that there are yet but twelve days," &c. These twelve days are thus reckoned by Bishop Wordsworth:—

- (1.) Arrival at Jerusalem, xxi. 15-17.
- (2.) Interview with James and the elders, xxi. 18.
- (3.) Ἀγνισμός, Nazariteship declared, xxi. 26.
- (7.) The seven days nearly completed, xxi. 27. On the same day Paul arrested in the temple, and his speech to the people.
- (8.) On the morrow, xxii. 30, he is brought before the Sanhedrim.
- (9.) In the morning overtures of the conspirators to the chief priests, xxiii. 12. Paul sent that night to Antipatris, xxiii. 31.
- (10.) On the morrow Paul arrives at Cæsarea.
- (13.) After five days (xxiv. 1), that is, on the fifth day after his departure from Jerusalem, he is accused by Tertullus, not more than twelve days after his arrival at Jerusalem.

12 <sup>1</sup> And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, <sup>1</sup> ch. xxv. 8. & xxviii. 17. neither in the synagogues, nor in the city :

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after <sup>2</sup> the way which they call heresy, so worship I the <sup>3</sup> God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in <sup>m</sup> the law and in the prophets :

15 And <sup>n</sup> have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, <sup>o</sup> that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

<sup>2</sup> See Amos viii. 14. ch. ix. 2.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. i. 3.

<sup>m</sup> ch. xxvi. 22.

& xxviii. 23.

<sup>n</sup> ch. xxiii. 6..

& xxvi. 6, 7.

& xxviii. 20.

<sup>o</sup> Dan. xii. 2. John v. 28, 29.

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15. "Of the dead." So E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Æth.; but omitted by N, A., B., C., some few Cursives, Vulg., Sah., Copt., Arm.

12, 13. "And they neither found me in the temple . . . now accuse me." It would have been quite lawful for him, as our Lord and the first Apostles had done, to teach in the courts of the temple, and in the synagogues, but feeling that he was now in the field of other labourers, he abstained from this. He attended in the temple simply as a worshipper.

14. "But this I confess unto thee . . . and in the prophets." "The way," *i. e.*, Christianity. It is the same word with the same signification as in Acts ix. 2, "if he found any of this way," and xxii. 4, "I persecuted this way unto the death."

"Which they call heresy." Heresy is the same word which is translated "sect" in Tertullus' speech (ver. 5) "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes."

"So worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written," &c. In these words St. Paul declares that so far from being a heretic, or chooser of some new form of religion, he adhered to the old, and believed in the old law and the old prophets. In fact, his faith in Jesus enabled him to realize them and so believe them, in a far deeper and better way than any unbelieving Jew could possibly do.

15. "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow," &c. Without the belief in a resurrection there can be no

16 And <sup>p</sup> herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

<sup>q</sup> ch. xi. 29, 30.  
 & xx. 16. Rom.  
 xv. 25. 2 Cor.  
 viii. 4. Gal.  
 ii. 10.

17 Now after many years <sup>q</sup> I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

<sup>r</sup> ch. xxi. 26,  
 27. & xxvii. 21.

18 <sup>r</sup> Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found

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18. "Wherenpon." *h̄* of *ε*; read by H., L., P., most Cursives; but *h̄* of *ε*; by N., A., B., C., E. For difference see below.

hope in God, for, if we rise not again, then all our hopes perish in the grave. God, as soon as death seizes us, ceases to be our God, for He is not the God of the dead.

16. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience," &c. Herein, *i.e.*, in and through the hope or fear of the Resurrection. St. Paul always asserts his hope of the Resurrection, and his belief in future judgment. But not only does he *hope* in it, but he exercises himself in always preparing for it. It is no easy matter always to look for the Second Coming, and be ready to meet the bridegroom. May the Spirit which enabled St. Paul always thus to exercise himself, be in us, so that we, having the same hope, may be as watchful in keeping our conscience without the least stain upon it. "O God Whose blessed Son was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil and make us the sons of God and heirs of eternal life; grant us, we beseech Thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as He is pure; that when He shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom, where, with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end."

17. "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings." "After many years," several years. The last occasion of his being in Jerusalem was in A.D. 54, when he simply went up and saluted the Church, and then at once departed to Cæsarea.

"Alms to my nation and offerings." The alms were the moneys collected for the "poor saints" at Jerusalem. (1 Cor. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. viii. 1-4; ix. 1-2, &c.) The offerings were his private offerings on being released from his vow.

18, 19. "Whereupon certain Jews from Asia . . . ought against

me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19 "Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me." ch. xxiii. 30. & xxv. 18.

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, 'Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.' ch. xxiii. 6. & xxviii. 20.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that way*, he deferred them, and said, When "Lysias the chief captain shall come down, " ver. 7. I will know the uttermost of your matter.

21. "Called in question by you." So N, E., H., L., P., most Cursives; but A., B., C., some Cursives and versions read, "before you."

22. Revisers, following N, A., B., C., read, "But Felix having more exact knowledge concerning the way, deferred them."

me." "Whereupon" (*ἐν αὐτῷ*) *i.e.*, in the midst of these things: but the older MSS. read *ἐν αὐτῷ*, "in the midst of which offerings,"—that is, instead of "profaning the temple," and "raising up tumults," I was employed in performing one of the most peculiar acts of Jewish worship.

"Who ought to have been here before thee, and object." If they could have proved that St. Paul had brought Trophimus, an uncircumcised man, into the temple, they had a right at once to demand his life. But their accusation was utterly untrue, so they dare not present themselves to be examined and cross-questioned.

20, 21. "Or else let these same here say, if they have found," &c. He appeals from the witness of those whom they ought to have taken care to have brought before the court, to themselves. "Ye yourselves examined me; what evil did you discover? Nothing except that I asserted that your examination of the reasons for my change of life and preaching raised the question of the truth of the Resurrection."

22. "And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that way*," *i.e.*, the way of Christianity. His long exercise of the supreme power must have constantly brought the

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and \* that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

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24. "The faith in Christ." So H., P., most Cursives, Syriac; but M., B., E., L., Vulg. (Amiat.), Copt., Arm., Æth., read, "in Christ Jesus," or "in Jesus Christ."

new "way" of the Gospel under his notice. His profligate and vicious life need not by any means have repelled him from hearing about the doctrine of Christ with interest. There was very much in it to excite his curiosity, and we not unfrequently find abandoned men discussing points of theology utterly condemnatory of their irreligious lives.

23. "And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty." This mild and tolerant custody was St. Paul's safety. When we call to mind the scene in the Temple as soon as ever he was recognized, the conspiracy of the forty, the violence in the Sanhedrim, we cannot doubt that if St. Paul had been at large a single day, he would have been discovered and murdered.

24. "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess." It appears from this that Felix left Cæsarea, and when he returned brought with him his wife, Drusilla. She was a Jewess, the daughter of the late King Agrippa, and the sister of Agrippa, the present King of Trachonitis. She was an adulteress, being the wife of Azizus, King of Emesa, and seduced to leave him by Felix.<sup>1</sup>

"He sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith of Christ." From Drusilla having been mentioned, it is not only probable that she was present at the interview, but that she sug-

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus gives the following account:—"But for the marriage of Drusilla with Azizus, it was in no long time afterward dissolved upon the following occasion: While Felix was procurator of Judæa, he saw this Drusilla, and fell in love with her, for she did indeed exceed all other women in beauty; and he sent to her a person whose name was Simon, one of his friends; a Jew he was, and by birth a Cypriot, and one who pretended to be a magician, and endeavoured to persuade her to forsake her present husband and marry him, and promised if she would not refuse him, he would make her a happy woman. Accordingly she acted ill, and . . . was prevailed upon to transgress the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix." (Ant., xx., chap. vii. 2.)



25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy

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gested it. She must have heard in her father's palace when she was a child, much about the Christians—that her father had ordered the execution of James the son of Zebedee—that he had imprisoned Peter, whose escape never could be accounted for, and that he himself died miserably immediately afterwards. As Dean Plumptre suggests, she may have connected her father's end with the persecution of the Christians, and was naturally desirous to hear all the truth about them.

25. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," &c. They sent for him to hear from him about the faith of Christ, as if it was a matter of speculation to amuse, or astonish, or excite—he seized the opportunity of bringing its practical issues home to them; to the cruel and unjust ruler and voluptuary, and to the adulteress. Before the faith of Christ can be practically apprehended, there must be some conviction of sin, and so St. Paul first reasoned of sin and its consequences. Before the unrighteous judge, who looked for bribes, and ordered his decisions so as to do men a pleasure, he proclaimed righteousness—that men should do to others as they would that men should do to them, and that God will bring unjust rulers to the most terrible account of all.

"And temperance," *i.e.*, that men are to keep their bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity, remembering that God will call them to account for the deeds done in the body, and that the ways of the adulteress are the ways of death and hell. (Prov. vii. 27).

"And judgment to come." St. Paul, no doubt, said to these sinners what he wrote in Rom. ii. 8, that "to them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

"Felix trembled." Well he might, but nothing good came of it. He was only the more hardened, as multitudes are now who delight to hear the preaching of Christ; and, even though it makes them for the moment uneasy, they deceive themselves by thinking that their uneasiness is a sign of good, and betokens that they will at some time repent and be saved. We have no reason to believe that God gave to Felix repentance unto life, and we have no reason to believe that God gives it to those who act like him.

way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Ex. xxiii. 3. 26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

A. D. 62. 27. But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Ex. xxiii. 3.  
ch. xii. 3. &  
xv. 9. 14.

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26. "That he might loose him." So H., L., P., and most Cursive; but N., A., B., C., E., K., 40, 51, 68, 73, 81, 106, Vulg., Syriac, Arm., Eth., omit the sentence.

"Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season," &c. We are not to take this as many do, that the convenient season never came, because we read in the next verse that he constantly sent for Paul, but that these were the words with which after this first and most important interview he dismissed him.

26. "He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul," &c. It has been supposed that St. Paul's relatives were wealthy inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he also, no doubt, thought, that if churches far away entrusted Paul with alms for the relief of the poor Christians of Jerusalem, they would subscribe for his release from his bonds.

27. "But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room," &c. Of Porcius Festus nothing is known except what we learn from two sentences in Josephus. "Now it was that Festus succeeded Felix as procurator, and made it his business to correct those that made disturbances in the country. So he caught the greatest part of the robbers, and destroyed a great many of them."

"And Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." He was recalled because of the charges of mal-administration which were sent up against him to Cæsar, and only escaped through the influence of his brother Pallas. In order, then, to break, as it were, the severity of his fall, he left a man, whose innocence he was well assured of, in bonds.

## CHAP. XXV.

NOW when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

2 °Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, <sup>b</sup> laying way in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

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2. "Then the high priest." So H., P., and the greater part of Cursives; but M, A., B., C., E., L., about twenty-five Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Copt., Arm., Æth., read, "high priests."

1. "Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days," &c. It was natural that he should desire to meet the high priest and the heads of the Jewish nation in their own national capital; but the disturbed state of the province may have had something to do with the little delay about his journey.

2. "Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul," &c. "The high priest"—this was probably Ismael, the son of Fabei or Phabi; but Mr. Blunt supposes that he was one Ananus, the third in succession from the Ananias who had commanded that Paul should be smitten on the mouth (Ananias, Ismael, Joseph, Ananus was the succession).

"Informed him against Paul." The two years' imprisonment had not in the least degree lessened their hatred. They felt that he was by far the most formidable enemy to both Sadduceeism and Pharisaical exclusiveness that then existed.

3. On the former occasion it was the Jews—that is, the fanatical Pharisaic Jews who conspired against the Apostle's life; now apparently it was the chief priests and foremost men who hired assassins.

4. "But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea,"

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, <sup>e</sup>if there be any wickedness in him.

<sup>e</sup> ch. xviii. 14.  
ver. 18.

| Or, as some copies read, *no more than eight or ten days.*

6 And when he had tarried among them || more than ten days, he went down into Cæsarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

<sup>d</sup> Mark xv. 3.  
Luke xxiii. 2,  
10. ch. xxiv.  
5, 13.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, <sup>d</sup>and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

<sup>e</sup> ch. vi. 13.  
& xxiv. 12.  
& xxviii. 17.

8 While he answered for himself, <sup>e</sup>Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all.

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6. "More than ten days." So H., L., P., and most Cursives; but N, A., B., C., nearly twenty Cursives, Vulg., &c., read, "Not more than eight or ten days."

&c. No doubt Festus has been informed by Lysias and Felix of the former lying in wait; and suspected that those who made the request were taking measures to kill Paul on the journey.

5. "Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me," &c. "Are able"—*δυνατοι*. This most probably means the chief men among them, or, perhaps, those who had information which would bear examination in a court of justice.

6, 7, 8. "And when he had tarried among them . . . have I offended any thing at all." The many and grievous complaints are not specified, but we may gather from St. Paul's answer that they were the old calumnies; that he spake against the law, whereas when they caught him in the Temple, he was performing an act of worship which, amongst the multitude of Jewish ceremonies, was of an ultra-ritualistic character; that he spake against the Temple, whereas, whilst he was in Jerusalem, it was his house of prayer; that he spake against Cæsar, whereas Cæsar had not a more obedient subject, for he taught obedience to the powers that be, no matter what their character; Claudius and Nero were to him, as professed upholders of law and order, ministers of God for good.

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, <sup>†</sup> Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, <sup>†</sup> ch. xxiv. 27. and there be judged of these things before me? <sup>‡</sup> ver. 20.

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 <sup>h</sup> For if I be an offender, or have committed <sup>h</sup> ver. 25. ch. xviii. 14. & xxiii. 29. & xxvi. 31. any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die:

9. "But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul," &c. They were evidently intent upon having him tried before the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, no doubt believing that they could there more effectually condemn him on some point of Jewish law, or have him murdered in the city. Festus wished to do them a pleasure, and yet, knowing their hatred of Paul, he desired to protect him by having the trial conducted in his own presence—"before me," as he said.

10. "Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat," &c. St. Paul here asserts his rights as a Roman citizen, and he asserts them in a very strong and decisive way. His words are not to be taken as if he then for the first time put himself, as it were, before the Imperial Court of Justice; but they are to be taken as if he had all along, from the time of his being sent to Cæsarea as a Roman (xxiii. 27), been before the tribunal of Cæsar. And this was literally the fact; for the Sanhedrim, when they came to Cæsarea (xxiv. 1), were not his judges, but his accusers—he being before a higher court than theirs, viz., the court of the procurator. Respecting causes tried before the procurators in the different provinces, Ulpian writes: "Quæ acta gesta que sunt a Procuratore Cæsaris, sic ab eo comprobantur, atque si a Cæsare ipso gesta sunt."

The original is *Ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος Καίσαρος ἑστώς εἶμι*, the Greek perfect signifying continued action from the past to the present. Dean Plumptre renders it, "I am standing, and have stood all along."

"To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest." The procurator knew it very well, because the Jews had just been laying "many and grievous complaints against Paul which they could not prove."

11. "For if I be an offender . . . I refuse not to die . . . no man

but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. 'I appeal unto Cæsar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus.

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may deliver me unto them." St. Paul clearly saw that if he went to Jerusalem to be judged, even by Festus, he would be virtually delivered up into the hands of the Jews, for, notwithstanding the presence of the governor, they would have infinitely more power in Jerusalem than they had in Cæsarea.

"I appeal unto Cæsar." A Roman citizen had a right of appeal; but to allow it in all cases without distinction would only retard the administration of justice, and would often lead to great public inconvenience. It was, therefore, put under certain restrictions; and the judge exercised a discretion whether, under the particular circumstances, the claim ought to be conceded. Festus now deliberated with his council, or board of advice—his *amici curiæ*—upon the propriety of admitting the appeal; and as there could be no valid reasons for refusing it, they decided in the affirmative, and Festus declared the result: "Hast thou appealed?" or, "Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar. Unto Cæsar shalt thou go."

It has been said that there is something like a sneer in the delivery of this sentence, as if Festus said, Thou hast refused to be judged by a court at which I should have presided, and have taken care that all justice should be done to thee, and thy sentence speedily pronounced; but now, as thou hast chosen it to be so, thou must experience all the uncertainties, the delays, and the vexations of the Imperial Court.

13. "And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea," &c. This was Herod Agrippa the Second, the son of the Herod Agrippa of Acts xii., who died so miserably after the murder of James and the imprisonment of Peter. He was but seventeen years old when his father died, and was then in Rome. He paid his court most assiduously to the Emperor Claudius, and was made by him, when only twenty years old, ruler of Chalcis,

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, <sup>k</sup> There <sup>k</sup> ch. xxiv. 27. is a certain man left in bonds by Felix :

15 <sup>l</sup> About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the <sup>l</sup> ver. 2, 3. chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

16 <sup>m</sup> To whom I answered, It is not the manner <sup>m</sup> ver. 4, 5. of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore, when they were come hither, <sup>n</sup> without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, <sup>n</sup> ver. 6. and commanded the man to be brought forth.

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16. "To deliver any man to die." So H., L., P., most Cursives, and Syriac; but "to die" (ἀπὸ θανάτου), omitted by K, A., B., C., E., eight Cursives, Copt., Sah., Arm., Æth.

and afterwards was set over the countries which had been possessed by Philip, viz., Ituræa and Trachonitis, and also Abilene, with the title of king. He came down from Cæsarea Philippi to pay his court to Festus, bringing with him his sister Bernice, a profligate and wicked woman. She was the eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and was first married to her uncle Herod, King of Chalcis; and after his death she lived under circumstances of great suspicion with her own brother, Agrippa II. (Joseph., Ant., xx. 7, 3; Juvenal, Sat., vi. 156). She was a second time married to Polemon, King of Cilicia, but soon left him, and returned to her brother. She afterwards became the mistress of Vespasian, and of his son Titus (Smith's Dictionary).

14, 15, 16, 17. "And when they had been there . . . and commanded the man to be brought forth." Festus, no doubt, mentioned St. Paul's case to Agrippa as really desiring some trustworthy information from him with respect to the opinions or prejudices of the Jews—in what way St. Paul had so offended them as to draw down upon himself such bitter hatred. He had refused to give judgment against him till, according to the manner of the Romans, the accusers and the accused had been confronted with one another.

18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed :

o ch. xviii. 18.  
& xxiii. 29.

19 ° But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

|| Or, I was  
doubtful how  
to enquire  
hereof.

20 And because || I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

18. "None accusation." So H., L., P., and most Cursive; but N, C\*, several Cursive (about fourteen), Vulg., Syriac, Arm., Æth., read, "no criminal accusation," and B., E., "accusation of crimes."

This he had brought about ; but he was left after the trial in still greater perplexity, for, as he complains,

18, 19. "Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation . . . but had certain questions against him of their own superstition." The word translated "superstition" is the same as that (or a form of that) which is used respecting the religious worship of the Athenians; and inasmuch as Festus was desirous of conciliating Agrippa, who was by profession a Jew, he would certainly not use a word which had a sinister meaning, but one usually employed to denote religious worship in general.

"One Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Festus was, no doubt, what we call a matter-of-fact man; and the only *fact* which he could really get at was this—that a man was dead, who was by St. Paul said to be alive. We are to remember that Festus was profoundly ignorant of all and every aspect of the Jewish faith. He knew nothing whatsoever of the hopes of a Messiah. The admission of Gentiles into the Church on equal terms with the Jews, and justification by faith, not by the works of the law, would be to him so much jargon. He might have some ideas respecting the immortality of the soul; but the resurrection of the body would be unintelligible to him, especially as connected with the Resurrection of the Lord. So that there was but one fact which he could grasp—that it was universally agreed that a certain man had died on the cross, but that He was afterwards affirmed to have been seen alive. How could a prisoner be sent to Rome on such a shadowy charge as believing this?

20, 21. "And because I doubted . . . send him to Cæsar."



21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the || hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar. 1 Or, judgment.

22 Then <sup>p</sup> Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, p See ch. ix. 15. thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom <sup>a</sup> all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both <sup>a</sup> ver. 2, 3, 7.

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“Hearing of Augustus.” Augustus is here not a proper name, but a sort of official title of respect given to all the emperors, just as the appellation “his Majesty” is given to our monarchs, or “his Holiness” to the Bishop of Rome.

22, 23. “Then Agrippa said unto Festus. . . . Paul was brought forth.”

“I would also hear the man myself.” The words seem to denote a peculiar desire, as if he had often heard of him, and now was glad that his desire would be gratified.

“And on the morrow . . . with great pomp.” Almost all commentators remark that in this very hall, this Agrippa's father had displayed himself and received the adulation of the multitude, and was smitten by the angel of God. This was by far the greatest hearing—so far as the audience were concerned—that Christianity had as yet had. There was Festus, the representative of the Emperor, there were the two royal personages, Agrippa and Bernice, there were the chief priests, there were the chief captains of the troops quartered in Cæsarea, which, on account of the disturbed state of Palestine, would then be very numerous, and the principal municipal officers and citizens of Cæsarea. In it was fulfilled the words of the Lord, “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”

24, 25. “And Festus said, King Agrippa . . . I have determined to send him.” If he had committed nothing worthy of death, why

at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that he ought 'not to  
' ch. xxii. 22. live any longer.

25 But when I found that 'he had committed  
' ch. xxiii. 9, 29. & xxvi. 31. nothing worthy of death, 'and that he himself  
' ver. 11, 12. hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

should he not be released? Because he had appealed unto Cæsar. And why had he appealed unto Cæsar? In order that he might not be delivered up to the Jews. Paul knew that if he was sent to Jerusalem, and acquitted there, then the moment he was at large, he would be a dead man. His only security was that he should be sent out of the country under a safe escort to Rome.

26, 27. "Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord." "My lord," rather "the lord," meaning the emperor. St. Luke's historical accuracy is noticed here by most commentators, in that the title "lord" was then beginning to be applied to the Roman emperors. Augustus altogether forbade it. Tiberius also had declined it, and both on the ground that it was a title due only to the gods. It was first accepted by Caligula, and his successors made no scruple about receiving it.

"Specially before thee, O king Agrippa." Agrippa had been made by the emperor the governor of the Temple, and he had the appointment of the high priests. He would scarcely have accepted such offices unless he took **much** interest in the Jewish religion.

"Not withal to signify the crimes." The charges of profaning the Temple and exciting sedition had been dismissed as altogether baseless. The only remaining matter was that he affirmed that a Man was alive Who was known to have died a public death, but they at Rome would suppose that Festus was insulting them by sending up one against whom was laid a charge of such a nature, and nothing further.

## CHAP. XXVI.

**T**HEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself :

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews :

3 Especially *because I know* thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews : wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews ;

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1. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself." By the courtesy of Festus, Agrippa appears to be allowed to act as president of the assembly, Festus probably feeling that owing to his knowledge of Jewish customs and opinions he was the more likely to get at the truth respecting Paul.

"Then Paul stretched forth the hand," *i.e.*, the hand that was free and not chained to the soldier's wrist.

2, 3. "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself," &c. These are not words of flattery, for it had been St. Paul's misfortune to have been tried before Roman magistrates, who had not only no knowledge of, but the most contemptuous indifference to, the matters involved in the controversy between him and his adversaries. Festus, for instance, affected to consider it a dispute whether one Jesus was alive or dead. Agrippa, on the contrary, being no doubt brought up by his father in an accurate knowledge of Judaism, would understand what was meant by a Resurrection, by the prophecies respecting a Messiah, and by the hopes entertained by the Jews respecting that Messiah.

4, 5. "My manner of life from my youth . . . I lived a Pharisee."

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after <sup>a</sup>the most straittest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

6 <sup>b</sup>And now I stand and am judged for the hope of <sup>c</sup>the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which *promise* <sup>d</sup>our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* <sup>e</sup>† day and night, <sup>f</sup>hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

<sup>a</sup> ch. xxii. 3. & xxiii. 6. & xxiv. 15, 21. Phil. iii. 5.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. xxiii. 6.  
<sup>c</sup> Gen. iii. 15. & xxii. 18. & xxvi. 4. & xlix. 10. Dent. xviii. 15. 2 Sam. vii. 12. Ps. cxxxii. 11. Is. iv. 2. & vii. 14. & ix. 8. & xl. 10. Jer. xxxiii. 5. & xxxiii. 14, 15, 16. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. & xxxvii. 24. Dan. ix. 24. Mic. vii. 20. ch. xiii. 32. Rom. xv. 8. Titus ii. 13.  
<sup>d</sup> James i. 1.  
<sup>e</sup> † Gr. *night and day*.  
<sup>f</sup> Luke ii. 37. 1 Tim. v. 5. 1 Thess. iii. 10. † Phil. iii. 11.

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7. "King Agrippa." So H., L., P., and most Cursives; but N, B., C., E., I., eight Cursives, Vulg., Copt., Arm., omit "Agrippa."

These two opening verses of St. Paul's defence suggest this question: If he was thus brought up in the most straittest sect of the Jewish religion, how came he to change? He had given up a very high position; probably wealth, certainly honour and esteem amongst his own people, that he might become the disciple of

One regarded by the heads of his own religion as a blasphemer and an impostor. The next two or three verses show.

6, 7. "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise," &c. This promise was not merely the promise of a Messiah, but that this Messiah should be put to death, and then live and reign after death (Psalm xxii.; Isaiah liii.). And because He was to live a risen life so were His people. This was expressed by Job when he spoke of his "Redeemer living and standing in the latter day upon the earth, and that in his flesh he should see God;" by Isaiah (xxvi. 19) when he said, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise;" by Daniel (xii. 2), "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

But why was St. Paul *judged* for the hope of the promise? Because all the offence which St. Paul had occasioned was inextricably bound up with the Resurrection of Christ. If Christ had risen, then the Pharisees were wrong in their rejection of Christ as the Messiah, and in all their teaching which contradicted the teaching of the Lord. If Christ had risen, then the Sadducees were utterly

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

9 "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>s</sup> John xvi. 2.  
<sup>1</sup> Tim. i. 13.

10 <sup>h</sup> Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority <sup>1</sup> from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

<sup>h</sup> ch. viii. 3.  
Gal. i. 13.

<sup>i</sup> ch. ix. 14, 21.  
& xxii. 5.

11 <sup>k</sup> And I punished them oft in every syna- <sup>k</sup> ch. xxii. 19.

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wrong in rejecting a Resurrection, seeing that Christ had risen. Had God fulfilled His greatest promise in the Resurrection of the Lord? St. Paul said that He had, and that that promise involved the hope of the resurrection of all men.

7. "Unto which promise our twelve tribes." It is very probable that there were vast numbers of the Israelites of the ten tribes among the Jews of the dispersion. Anna the prophetess was of the tribe of Aser, and St. Paul himself was not of Judah. St. James addresses his Epistle to "the Twelve Tribes scattered abroad." The late Dr. Wolff told me that most of the Jews of Bokhara were of other tribes than that of Judah.

8. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" St. Paul here, of course, addressed himself to the Jews. They almost universally believed in a Resurrection; thus Martha said, respecting Lazarus, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." They believed in the raising up of the widow's son by Elijah, and of the Shunammite's son by Elisha. There was nothing incredible, at least to them, in God raising up Christ from the dead, of which St. Paul now proceeds to show that he had the most convincing evidence.

9, 10, 11. "I verily thought with myself . . . strange cities." A man who could do all this to the Christians because they were the followers of the Lord, could be under no hallucination respecting His appearance. Of all men living he would be the last to imagine the crucified Jesus to be now in glory at the right hand of the Father.

"Many of the saints." Notice how he calls the followers of the

gogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

<sup>1</sup> ch. ix. 3. &  
<sup>xxii.</sup> 6.

12 <sup>1</sup> Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared

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Lord "saints," thus appropriating to them the title especially belonging to the Lord's ancient people (Ps. lxxix. 2).

"I gave my voice against them." "Voice," literally vote ( $\psi\eta\phi\omicron\varsigma$ , voting pebble). This must have been in the subordinate courts, for it was not likely that Saul, then young, would have been one of the Sanhedrim.

12, 13, 14, 15. This is the third account of the conversion of the Apostle. It adds two or three details to the other accounts. The brightness of the light is emphasized—a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun. Then he tells them that the Lord spake unto him "in the Hebrew tongue." This he did not mention in his defence, when he stood on the stairs, because he was then himself speaking in the same—*i.e.*, in the Aramaic; and, lastly, he mentions how the Lord used the proverb, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." This is most probably peculiar to this account, and has been interpolated in Acts ix. 5 from it.

16, 17, 18. "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee," &c. The question presents itself, Were these words spoken by the Lord at the time of St. Paul's conversion? I cannot think that they were, and for this reason—that in both the other accounts he asks the Lord what He would have him do, and the Lord bids him go into Damascus, for *there* it was to be told

unto thee for this purpose, <sup>m</sup> to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, <sup>m</sup> ch. xxii. 15. and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, <sup>n</sup> unto whom now I send thee, <sup>n</sup> ch. xxii. 21.

17. "Unto whom now." So some Cursives; but N, A., B., C., E., H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Copt., Arm., omit "now."

him what he should do. I believe, then, that St. Paul either gives the substance of what was said to Ananias, ix. 15, xxii. 15, or that these words were said to him by the Lord when he was praying in the Temple (xxii. 21).<sup>1</sup>

"To make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen." We have no less than three full accounts "of the things Paul had seen"—*i.e.*, at his conversion; and no doubt he never preached to the Jews in any of their synagogues without telling them what had led to his own change of life.

"And of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." St. Paul learnt much from such visions as that recorded in 2 Corinth. xii., which he made known to the churches.

17. "Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom," &c. The Lord here promises that he should be safe, and so he was. Look how often he was in danger of his life from the Jews from the time of his conversion to this moment, and from the Gentiles, as at Lystra and Ephesus.

"I send thee." The Lord here sends him; but the actual going forth took place at his ordination by the Holy Ghost to the Apostleship, as described in Acts xiii.

18. "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power," &c. "To open their eyes," &c. The reader will remember the prophecy of God's servant: "I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. To

<sup>1</sup> Alford's remarks seem to me very sensible: "There can be no question but that St. Paul here condenses into one various sayings of our Lord to him at different times in visions. See ch. xxii. 18-21, and by Ananias, ix. 15. Nor can this on the strictest view be considered any deviation from truth. It is what all must more or less do who are abridging a narrative or giving the general sense of things said at various times. There were reasons for his being minute and particular in the details of his conversion; that once related, the commission which he thereupon received is not followed into its details, but summed up as committed to him by the Lord Himself."

18 ° To open their eyes, and ° to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, ° that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and ° inheritance among them which are ° sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision :

20 But ° shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do ° works meet for repentance.

° Is. xxxv. 5. & xlii. 7. Luke i. 79. John viii. 12. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. i. 18. 1 Thess. v. 5. p 2 Cor. vi. 14. Eph. iv. 18. & v. S. Col. i. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 9, 25. q Luke i. 77. r Eph. i. 11. Col. i. 12. s ch. xx. 32. t ch. ix. 20, 22, 29. & xi. 26. & xiii. & xiv. & xvi. & xvii. & xviii. & xix. & xx. & xxi. u Matt. iii. 8.

open the blind eyes" (Isaiah xlii. 6, 7), and Simeon's hymn : "To be a light to lighten the Gentiles" (Luke ii. 32). What is prophesied of as the Lord's especial work is to be done by the hands of human ministers, acting by His authority, and rendered effectual by His omnipresent power.

"By faith that is in me." Forgiveness and the hope of a blessed immortality come not through amendment—not through philosophy or reason, but through faith in Him as a Risen Saviour. Notice, "through faith in me." Here He sets Himself forth as the Divine Object of faith, not apart from the Father, for "our faith and hope is in God," but inseparable from Him, and co-equal with Him. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John xiv. 9.)

19. "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

20. "Damascus" (Acts ix. 20). Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues.

"Jerusalem" (ix. 29). He spake boldly in the synagogues.

"All the coasts of Judæa." No doubt on his way northward to Cilicia (ix. 30).

"Then to the Gentiles" (xi. 26). So the whole of the Apostle's life to this day.

"That they should repent and turn to God." "Repent." So the Baptist preached, so the Lord preached (Mark i. 15), so St. Peter (Acts ii. 38). The words "meet for repentance" seem to be a reminiscence of the Baptist's teaching in Matthew iii. 8.



21 For these causes <sup>x</sup> the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

<sup>x</sup> ch. xxi. 30, 31.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and <sup>z</sup> Moses did say should come :

<sup>y</sup> Luke xxiv. 27, 44. ch. xxiv. 14. & xxviii. 23.

23 <sup>a</sup> That Christ should suffer, *and* <sup>b</sup> that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and <sup>c</sup> should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Rom. iii. 21.  
<sup>z</sup> John v. 46.  
<sup>a</sup> Luke xxiv. 26, 46.  
<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 20.  
Col. i. 18.  
Rev. i. 5.  
<sup>c</sup> Luke ii. 32.

How miserably mistaken they are who in the present day, in order, as they think, to exalt Christ, put His own teaching and that of His principal servant respecting repentance into the background, or rather ignore it altogether!

21, 22, 23. "For these causes . . . unto the people, and to the Gentiles." For these causes—principally, of course, because he preached the salvation of Christ to the Jews and Gentiles on the same terms.

"Having therefore obtained help of God." The Apostle ascribes it to the ever-present and powerful assistance of God, that he should have been able himself personally to bear up against such manifold persecution and opposition.

"Which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer"—literally, that Christ was passible—but He became passible, *i. e.*, capable of suffering, in order that He might endure suffering.

The Jews, blinded by false national hopes, strangely shut their eyes to the mixture of sufferings with the promised glories of the Messiah. And they equally ignored the predictions that Christ should be a light of the Gentiles. But St. Paul, in preaching both these, did nothing else than bring into the foreground what the old prophets prophesied of the Son of David.

"Should be the first that should rise from the dead." The reader will remember the words, "Christ the firstfruits of them that slept," "Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming."

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, <sup>d</sup> thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Kings ix.  
11. John x. 20.  
1 Cor. i. 23. &  
ii. 13, 14. & iv.  
10.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

24, 25. "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice," &c. It suddenly seems to have dawned upon the mind of Festus that St. Paul's repeated asseverations that Christ was alive were no unmeaning affirmations, but involved astonishing issues. These his sceptical mind at once rejected as insanity. But Paul repels this.

25. "But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." Instead of being mad, the sight of the Lord had restored him to his true senses. The appearance of the Crucified One in overpowering glory was to him the most real of all realities. It had blinded him, and struck him to the earth. It had changed the whole purpose of his life. It had enabled him to do miracles, to speak with all manner of tongues; it had even enabled him in some cases to raise those who were physically dead, and in innumerable others to raise souls from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. And this was not his solitary belief. He had lived and conversed with those who had lived with the Lord, and had seen, felt, and handled Him after He was risen; who also, like himself, did physical and spiritual miracles in the same all-powerful Name.

26. "For the king knoweth of these things . . . this thing was not done in a corner." If Herod was seventeen years old when his father died in A.D. 44 or so, he must have been eight years old at the time of St. Paul's conversion in A.D. 35. It is impossible then to suppose that so remarkable an event as the sudden turning of the greatest enemy of the Christians into their firmest friend and the most active disseminator of their religion, should have been unknown to him. On the contrary, he must have heard of it times without number. The strict Pharisees about him must have bewailed it constantly in his hearing. The Sadducean high priests must have as constantly lamented before him the loss of such an instrument, and ridiculed

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

the reason for his defection. The band of men who saw the light, and the sudden fall of their leader, and his instantaneous stroke of blindness, could not have kept all this to themselves. It was no doubt talked of everywhere, and repeated with all sorts of exaggerations. And all this followed hard upon the crucifixion of the great wonder-working Prophet and the Pentecostal miracles, which witnessed to His glorification, filling all Jerusalem with astonishment; whilst other miracles followed in the Temple itself. Verily these things were not done in a corner, and Agrippa, though he might affect ignorance, knew all about them, and turned from the thought of it all as convincing him more than all that his Judaism had taught him of the exceeding danger of his wicked life.

27. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." This is a very important passage indeed in a theological point of view. It teaches us that there may be faith without works, and genuine faith too, or the Apostle would not have said with such emphasis, "I know that thou believest." What then was the faith of Agrippa? It was intellectual faith, inherited faith, but practical to a certain extent, for it would most certainly have prevented Agrippa from dishonouring God by worshipping the gods which Festus, the man at his side, worshipped. Was it then saving faith? Assuredly not, if we are to believe what we read of him in history. So far from being saving it was condemning faith. The wrath of God was revealed against him (and against all like him) because he held back the truth in unrighteousness. He held it back from its proper legitimate effect in purifying his heart, and making him fear and love God. His faith being without works, was dead, being alone. What then would make it saving? Simply acting upon it—acting upon the statements of the prophets respecting repentance and turning to God, and praying to Him and accepting His promises. This, by God's grace, would make him a true Christian.

28. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be," &c. Two altogether opposite meanings have been given to this passage. One implies that Agrippa spoke sincerely; he was so moved by the weight of St. Paul's appeal that he exclaimed, "Very nearly thou art persuading me to become a Christian."

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

28. "Thou persuadest me to be," or "to make me" (ποιῆσαι). See note at the end of this chapter.

The other implies that Agrippa spoke scornfully of St. Paul's arguments or powers of persuasion. Thus Alford: "I would therefore render the words thus: 'Lightly art thou persuading me to be a Christian,' and understand them in connection with Paul's having attempted to make Agrippa a witness on his side. 'I am not so easily to be made a Christian of as thou supposest.'"

Wordsworth lays more stress upon the expression, ἐν ὀλίγῳ, as being an expression of time, as evidently it is, and understands a tacit reference to St. Paul's sudden conversion; as if he said: 'In a moment thou wast converted, and thou endeavourest to convert me in a moment, but I must have more time to consider before I take such a step.' Dean Plumtre writes, "Agrippa's words accordingly are the expression, not of a half belief, but of a cynical sneer, 'Thou art trying to make a Christian of me with very few words on very slender grounds.'"

Notwithstanding, however, the great names and authorities which are, on different grounds, in favour of the second, that is the cynical or scornful meaning, I adhere to the first, that the words were *at the moment* said sincerely; that the Authorized Version though not absolutely correct as not giving sufficiently the idea of time involved in ἐν ὀλίγῳ, is far nearer to the true signification than that which modern learned men would substitute for it.

The Syriac translates it exactly as our Authorized, "nearly" (*prope modum*, ܒܩܠܝܠ) "thou persuadest me." Cyril of Jerusalem (whose vernacular was Greek) makes it an instance of the grace of the Holy Spirit. "And when brought to Cæsarea, and encompassed by the seats of judges, Paul, at one time before Felix, and at another before Festus the governor, and King Agrippa, obtained of the Holy Ghost grace so great, and of such overcoming wisdom, that, at last Agrippa himself, the King of the Jews, said, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'" Again, Chrysostom, whose vernacular was Greek, also draws attention to the exact meaning of the expression: "And Agrippa said unto Paul, 'Ἐν ὀλίγῳ, thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'" What is ἐν ὀλίγῳ? within a little, παρὰ μικρόν."

These authorities are sufficient as regards the translation. As

29 And Paul said, "I would to God, that not" 1 Cor. 7, 7.

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regards the sense, I desire to remark as follows. It seems to me absurd to suppose that Agrippa would speak with contempt of the two appeals which St. Paul had made—one, to his knowledge of what had occurred in his own time in his father's kingdom; and the other, to his belief in the prophets. For a little before his time all Judæa had resounded with the fame of the miracles of Jesus of Nazareth. With such fear and hatred did the heads of the Jewish Church regard Him that they put Him to a violent death; but this, so far from putting an end to His doctrines, increased their spread an hundred fold. His Body could not be found, and it was declared far and wide that He was risen from the dead. Fifty days after His death all Jerusalem rang with the report of the great Pentecostal miracles, which were ascribed by all who performed them solely to the power of this risen Jesus, and culminated some few years after in the conversion of the man before them. All this was well known, for it was assuredly "not done in a corner." But, besides this, Paul appealed to Agrippa's belief in the prophets. Now, if he believed the prophets, he must have believed that the Messiah would do miracles; that He would be put to a cruel death; but that He would live and reign from heaven after death. If he believed the prophets at all, he must believe that they predicted these things. St. Paul thus appeals to his knowledge and his belief; and no more cogent appeals could possibly have been made to him—postulating, that is, that he was theologically a sincere Jew. If the Apostle had spoken after the manner of a modern Rationalist—that the Lord's miracles, and those of His servants, were very doubtful, that the Resurrection was a pious illusion, and that the prophets never predicted things that did not occur in their own times—then Agrippa might well have answered: "Lightly thou persuadest me—on very slender grounds, thou persuadest me to be a Christian;" but St. Paul believed intensely in the supernatural life of the Lord, and that supernatural life as energizing in his servants; and he assuredly believed in the supernatural inspiration of the prophets, and he spake accordingly. And this it was which called forth the expression, "Almost thou persuadest me." The words came to nothing, having no root in his will, but they are assuredly registered against him.

29. "And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but

only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them :

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, 'This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

f ch. xxiii. 9,  
29. & xxv. 25.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, <sup>s</sup> if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

s ch. xxv. 11.

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30. "And when he had thus spoken." So H., L., P., most Cursives; but N, A., B., seven Cursives, Vulg., Syriac, Arm., Æth., omit.

also all that hear me," &c. St. Paul catches at the word *ὀλίγω* as signifying "with short persuasion;" and says in effect, that the shortness or the length of time spent in persuading was no matter, provided Agrippa was persuaded.

"Such as I am." That is, "made free from sin, and become the servant of God, bearing fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life."

30, 31, 32. "And when he had thus spoken . . . appealed unto Cæsar." Thus God overrules all events, even what we should call "miscarriages of justice." He might have been set at liberty, which would have been quickly followed by his murder in the then state of the Jewish mind towards him. He had appealed unto Cæsar, and so must see Rome; must build up the Church there; must witness before the chief prince of this evil world; must have fruit of souls of men in great Babylon itself.

#### NOTE ON VERSE 29.

It may be well to examine this place, as to its strictly literal meaning, more fully than the space allowed for the critical notes will permit. The words rendered absolutely literally are: "In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian." The phrase, *ἰν ὀλίγω*, according to the Lexicons, is usually an expression of time. It is used but once elsewhere in the New Testament, and signifies there "briefly"—"as I wrote afore briefly" (Ephes. iii. 3). It is

true that our Authorized gives "in few words," but that would be briefly; for to write with many words is to write at length, and to write with few is to write briefly. Translating it, then, as an expression of time, the rendering most in accordance with our English idiom would be that of Dean Howson: "'Soon' thou art persuading me to be a Christian," or "quickly." "With a little more time spent in persuasion thou wilt make me a Christian." It is impossible to suppose that *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* can be translated "lightly," or by any word or phrase of similar meaning, as "on slender grounds," &c.—there is no instance which can be cited of such meaning; and if it can in reason be translated as the same phrase in Ephes. iii. is, it ought to be. Assuming, then, that it has some such meaning as "soon," "quickly," "in a short time," is it said sincerely or ironically? If said ironically, it must be with reference to the Apostle's arguments; and I have shown that it is very unlikely that Agrippa would, from the point of view of a Jew, treat them with scorn. If he resented or despised Paul's reasoning, he would have said, "with lying words," or on "false grounds" thou persuadest me, but not on light or slender grounds, much less "in too short a time."

And now a word with reference to the difference of reading *ποιῆσαι*, instead of *γενίσθαι*. This is one of those many cases in which certain critics follow three or four manuscripts, and push aside the evidence of all the rest of Christendom. *ποιῆσαι* is read only in *κ*, *A.*, *B.*, and in Cursives 13, 17, 40, 61, the margin of an inferior Syriac, and the Coptic; *γενίσθαι* is read by *E.*, *H.*, *L.*, *P.*, all the Cursives, except the four above cited; the Vulgate, Syriac (Schaaf), and the two Fathers, Cyril of Jerusalem, at the beginning of the fourth century, and Chrysostom at its end. But the reading *ποιῆσαι* cannot alter the meaning of *ἐν ὀλίγῳ*; it cannot make the word *πειθεὶς* conditional, nor can it remove the unlikelihood of making Agrippa speak ironically. It can only make the translation more awkward. "In a little time thou usest persuasion, so as to make me a Christian." Thus Tischendorf: "Videtur autem Scriptura quam probavimus ita explicanda, ut *ποιῆσαι* eodem quo *ὥστε ποιῆσαι* sensu accipiatur."

## CHAP. XXVII.

AND when \*it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners \* ch. xxv. 12, 25. unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

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1. "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul," &c. In this account of St. Paul's shipwreck, I must at the outset acknowledge my obligation to "The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," by the late James Smith, Esq., of Jordanhill. In this I am one with Lewin, Conybeare, Howson, Alford, Wordsworth, and in fact nearly every expositor of the Acts who has written since the publication of his book. By far the greater part of Dean Alford's commentary is taken from it verbatim.

"When it was determined." It is probable that this determination took effect in the July or August of A.D. 60, within a short time after the departure of Felix.

"And certain other prisoners." Were St. Paul's companions, Luke and Aristarchus, of the number of these prisoners, or did they accompany him voluntarily? Most probably the latter. The favourable impression which he had made on Festus and Agrippa, and his innocence of all charges laid against him, would occasion that he should be treated with all possible indulgence. During St. Paul's long durance in Cæsarea there is not the slightest hint of any of his friends sharing his imprisonment. Aristarchus was probably at this time with them, because when the ship had arrived at its destination it would be within a short sail of his home in Macedonia.

"Unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band." It is doubtful whether this "Augustus' band" was a body of horsemen mentioned by Josephus ("Wars," ii. 12, 5), which was called the troop of Sebaste out of Cæsarea, or whether the centurion belonged to the body guard of the Emperor, formed out of the equestrian order, and being one of the centurions of this honourable body had



## ST PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME.



London George Bell.

*See also the map 'St. Paul's Journey to Rome'*

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one*<sup>b</sup> Aris-<sup>b</sup> ch. xix. 20. tarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius

2. "Meaning to sail" (μῆλλοντες, referring to the persons). So H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg.; but μῆλλοντι (referring to ship) in N., A., B., some Cursives, Syriac, Copt., Arm.

"To sail" [by]. So H., L., P., most Cursives; but N., A., B., and some Cursives, read αἱ. (See below).

been sent on some official business to Palestine, and being now on his way home, was charged with the safe conduct of the prisoners.

2. "And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail," &c. Rather, perhaps, "which was about to sail" [μῆλλοντι], alluding to the ship. The first intention of Julius, no doubt, was to proceed in the vessel to its destination, Adramyttium, and then cross over by land through Macedonia to the Adriatic, and thence from some port of Epirus or Macedonia, as Apollonia, to Brundisium, and so straight to Rome.

"Meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia." The Revisers render, "which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia," but this is on the assumption that εἰς (unto) is to be read. It is more probable that the meaning is as Bishop Wordsworth gives it: "The ship was about to sail by the places on the coast of Asia—πλεῖν εἰς would signify that it was sailing to them, with an intention of touching at them, which does not appear to have been the case." It was evidently the intention of Julius to reach Rome as soon as possible, in which case he would not have chosen a vessel which touched at all the intermediate ports.

"One Aristarchus." "One" is not in the original, and alters the sense for the worse. It implies that he was a somewhat unknown person, whereas he was well known as a friend of the Apostle. I cannot help thinking that his name is thus honourably mentioned because it was his intention to give material assistance to the Apostle in the intended overland journey through Macedonia.

3. "And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated," &c. "Touched at Sidon." Sidon being one of the most famous commercial ports and secure harbours, it was very probable that they would take up passengers or goods there.

‘ courteously entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

‘ ch. xxiv. 23.  
& xxviii. 16.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a *city* of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy: and he put us therein.

5. “Myra.” “Murra” in B.; N, A., and Vulg., read, “Lystra.”

“Courteously entreated Paul.” The word *courteously* is, literally, philanthropically. From the little intercourse he had had with the Apostle he felt sure that he would abuse no liberty allowed to him.

4. “And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus,” &c. The direct course from Sidon to Adramyttium would be north-westward to Rhodes, passing Cyprus on their right, and then northward to their destination; but the west winds were then prevalent, which would have hindered their course in the open sea, and so they sailed to the north, and by doing so were in a measure protected by Cyprus from the violence of these winds; and besides, by taking this course they availed themselves of a very strong current which constantly flows to the westward along the south of Asia Minor [Smith, who quotes Beaufort’s description of the South Coast of Asia], “from Syria to the Archipelago there is a constant current to the westward.” Dr. Pococke also notices the same, for he “found this current running so strong between Rhodes and the continent that it broke into the cabin windows even in calm weather.”

5. “And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra,” &c. Myra, now utterly desolate, must have been at that time a rich and populous place. This we gather from the remains of an immense theatre, and from the magnificent tombs cut in the rocks which “seem,” as Howson remarks, “to connect it with a remote period of Asiatic history.”

6. “And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.” It has been asked how a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy could be at Myra, and this has been supposed by some to be so unlikely that they have conjectured that

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under || Crete, over against Salmone; | Or, *Candy*.

a ship of Alexandria meant to indicate the particular build of the ship; but, as Mr. Smith says, "With the westerly winds which prevail in these seas, ships, particularly those of the ancients unprovided with a compass, and ill calculated to work to windward, would naturally stand to the north till they made the land of Asia Minor, which is peculiarly favourable for such a mode of navigation, because the coast is bold and safe, and the elevation of the mountains makes it visible at a great distance. It abounds in harbours, whilst the sinuosities of its shores and the westerly current would enable them, if the wind was at all off the land, to work to windward at least as far as Cnidus, where these advantages ceased." We learn from Thucydides (viii. 35) that Cnidus was frequented by ships from Egypt, ἀπ' Αἴγυπτου ὀλκάδες.

Add to this that the direct course from Alexandria to Rome would, if strong westerly or north-westerly breezes were blowing hard, put any vessel in peril of being wrecked on the Syrtes, or quicksands, as they are called in verse 17.

This vessel was a cornship (verse 38), and these ships were often as large as our largest merchantmen.

"And he put us therein." This, of course, was a change of plan. He thought that if the winds were fairly favourable they would much sooner arrive in Italy, and so it would have been if the typhoon had not unexpectedly risen.

7. "And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus," &c. With north-west winds the ship could work up from Myra to Cnidus, because until she reached that point she had the advantage of a weather shore, under the lee of which she would have smooth water, and, as just mentioned, a westerly current, but it would be slowly and with difficulty.

"Scarce" should be rendered "with difficulty." If understood as the English word usually is, it would mean that they had scarcely reached Cnidus, which was not the case.

"The wind not suffering us:" i.e., to proceed beyond the promontory of Cnidus. This straight course to Italy would be directly westward from Cnidus to the south point of the Peloponnesus, or rather the island of Cytherea, and rounding it to Italy, but the wind

8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens: nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was <sup>d The fast was</sup> now dangerous, <sup>4 because the fast was now already</sup> past, Paul admonished *them*,  
on the tenth day of the seventh month, Lev. xxiii. 27, 29.

being a strong north-west wind, would not suffer them. They had at Cnidus lost the advantage of the current, and so, if they were to proceed on their journey, they must sail to the south and take advantage of the shelter of the lee shore of Crete, and so make some way, hoping that more favourable winds would spring up.

“Over against Salmone.” When they rounded the point of the promontory of Salmone at the extreme east of Crete, they were in a measure protected from the violence of the north-west wind, which advantage would continue till they reached Cape Matala, about the middle of the south side of the island, when it would cease, as the shore then trends sharply to the north.

8. “And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens,” &c. “Hardly,” *i.e.*, with difficulty, as above.

“Came unto a place which is called The fair havens.” This is a roadstead protected by the promontory Cape Matala (anciently called Leon) from the north-west or Etesian winds, which blow with violence at that season when St. Paul was on his voyage. It yet retains the same name, Kalo Limniona. Smith writes: “Its position is precisely that where a ship, circumstanced as St. Paul’s was, must have put up. The wind was north-west, but with such a wind she could not pass Cape Matala; we must therefore look near to the eastward of the promontory, for an anchorage well calculated to shelter a vessel in north-west winds, but not from all winds; otherwise it would not have been, in the opinion of seamen, an unsafe winter harbour. Now here we have a harbour which notably fulfils every one of the conditions, and still retains the name given it by St. Luke.”

“City of Lasea.” There was probably no town at the Fair havens, as it is mentioned as near to the city of Lasca.

9. “Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous,” &c. “Much time was spent,” *i.e.*, in the roadstead, waiting for a more favourable wind.

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with || hurt and much damage, not only of *1 Or, injury.* the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

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“When sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past.” This fast was that of the great day of Atonement. This would occur at the end of September and the beginning of October. St. Paul, no doubt, as a religious Jew, would keep this fast, and his doing so is by some supposed to have impressed the occurrence of this fact upon the historian as a mark of time. Wordsworth notices a remarkable Rabbinical gloss on Isaiah xliii. 16, “Who maketh a way in the sea,” *i.e.*, from the feast of Pentecost to the feast of Tabernacles (four days after the fast). And another Rabbi says (“Sabbat,” v. 3), “No one ought to sail between the feast of Tabernacles and Dedication.”

“Sailing was now dangerous,” rather “The voyage (to Italy) was now dangerous.”

10. “And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt,” &c. How is it then that it is said in verse 24, “God hath given thee all them that sail with thee,” and the fulfilment of this was, “so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land,” verse 44? Because God’s purpose in an immense number of what we call minor matters, may be changed by prayer. There is a certain course of events which is according to the will of God, but may be changed by prayer into another course of events, still more according to His will. We have an instance of this which meets all difficulties, in Isaiah xxxviii. 1; there God is represented as saying to Hezekiah, “Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live,” but on account of Hezekiah’s prayers God relented: “I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.” In the natural course of things, in such a shipwreck, the greater part of the crew must have perished. This Paul foresaw, and was permitted to foretell the shipwreck, but he was not permitted to foretell the effect of his own prayers in alleviating the more fatal effects of it. The greatest prophets have not all things revealed to them. Thus with respect to the grief of the Shunammite, Elisha says, “Let her alone, for her soul is vexed within her, and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.” (2 Kings iv. 27.)

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; *which* is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

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12. "Lieth toward the south west and north west." See below.

11. "Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship." The master is the steerer, or, as it is sometimes translated, pilot; the owner, of course, was the man whose property the ship was. Both then, though looking from somewhat different points of view, gave the same advice, and the centurion naturally deferred to them rather than to a man who was not an expert. And, under ordinary circumstances, they would have been right, for the adverse wind had apparently gone down, and they could not foresee that a typhoon would suddenly strike the ship, the effects of which in the utter destruction of the vessel God had revealed to Paul.

12. "And because the haven was not commodious to winter in," &c. Being an open roadstead exposed to all gales from the south-east, south, and south-west.

"The more part advised to depart thence." This seems as if there was a general consultation, and many besides the captain, and owner, and the centurion, were invited to express their opinions.

"If by any means they might attain to Phenice . . . which is an haven of Crete." It is only of late years that this place has been identified as the harbour now called Lutro, as it is concealed by an island at its mouth and for ages was only known to pirates.

The harbour is formed by a peninsula with a somewhat narrow neck connecting it with the mainland. The harbour is on the east side of the peninsula, and faces the east or south-east; how then can it be said to look to the south-west and north-west? Evidently in this way—the sailors, according to their custom, describe the situation as seen from the sea. The expressions, "toward the south-west and north-west," do not mean that the harbour faces these

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But not long after there || arose against it a | Or, *beat*-tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

14. "Euroclydon." So H., L., P., most Cursive, Syriac; but N., A., B., read, "Euraculon." Vulgate has Euro-aquilo.

points of the compass, but that it looks down in the direction of the winds blowing from these points of the compass, which consequently blow from behind it, and so it is sheltered from the winds most adverse to ships sailing towards Italy. As Mr. Smith remarks, "When St. Luke describes the harbour of Phenice as looking *κατὰ Λίβα καὶ κατὰ Χῶρον*, I understand that it looks to the north-east, which is the point towards which Libs blows, and to the south-east, that to which Caurus blows. Now this is exactly the situation of Lutro, which looks, or is open, to the east; but having an island in front which shelters it, it has two entrances, one looking to the north-east, which is *κατὰ Λίβα*, that is down in the direction to which Libs blows, and the other to the south-east, *κατὰ Χῶρον*, down in the direction to which Caurus blows."

Others, as Mr. Blunt, interpret it with reference to the shores of Crete, *i.e.*, "it lieth to the south-west of Crete, but to the north-west of the Fair havens"; but this seems unlikely.

13. "And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose," &c. The change of wind would assist them in coasting along the shore.

"They sailed close by Crete." This seems to me to imply that after doubling Cape Matala they did not take a straight cut towards Phenice, but rather hugged the shore under Mount Ida, *i.e.*, the shore to the west of Cape Matala, turning sharp to the north and then to the west.

14. "But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon." "Arose against it." Apparently against the ship, but there is this difficulty, that the ship is throughout the narrative in the neuter gender, *τὸ πλοῖον*, whereas this word is feminine, *κατ' αὐτῆς*. Probably we are to take *κατ' αὐτῆς* in the sense of "down from it," *i.e.*, the island. Thus the Revisers, "then beat down from it."

"A tempestuous wind called Euroclydon." Rather a typhonic



15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat.

16. "Clauda" (Κλαυδα). So H., L., P., most Cursives. N reads Κλαυδα, A. Κλα, the rest being defective; B., Vulg., "Cauda;" Syriac, "Cyra."

wind, a typhoon. Smith quotes Captain J. Stewart, in his remarks on the Archipelago, as observing, "It is always safe to anchor under the lee of an island in a northerly wind, as it dies away gradually, but it would be extremely dangerous in southerly winds, as they almost invariably shift to a violent northerly wind."

"Which was called Euroclydon." There is a difference of reading here. Wordsworth strongly supports the reading Eurakulon. He remarks:—"The *ἀνεμος* is *that* which is called (*ὁ καλούμενος*) by the name in question. It was known by that name. If then Euroclydon were the true reading, it would probably be found *somewhere* as a name of a wind; but it nowhere occurs as such. None of these objections apply to the reading Eurakulon. The word was the name given by mariners to what the ancient Greeks called *Καυκίας*, which was the wind between Eurus and Aquilo, *i.e.*, the E.N.E. wind in the Roman compass, and therefore called Euro-Aquilo by the Roman seamen."

15. "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive." "And could not bear up into the wind." The word used is a curious one, and signifies literally to direct the eye against the wind. Ancient ships had commonly an eye painted on each side of their prows, a picture of such a ship is given in Lewin (p. 197), but such an allusion, though favoured by several commentators, seems doubtful. According to Alford, it is used by Polybius of men facing an enemy, and also of resisting temptation, and so the expression was transferred to a ship, from its usage in common life.

16. "And running under a certain island which is called Claudia." Running under, *i.e.*, to the south, so as to be somewhat sheltered from the typhoon which was blowing from the north-east. Claudia or Cauda is the modern Gozzo.

"We had much work to come by the boat." The boat was towed,

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

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17. "Strake sail." "Lowered the gear." (See below.)

and was no doubt full of water, and the heaving of the ship, notwithstanding the shelter of the island, being very great, they had much trouble in hoisting the boat on the deck.

17. "Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship," &c. The mode in which ships are undergirded is thus described by Falconer, in his "Marine Dictionary:"—"To **frap** a ship is to pass four or five times turns of a large cable-laid rope round the hull or frame of a ship, to support her in a great storm or otherwise, when it is apprehended that she is not strong enough to resist the violent efforts of the sea; this expedient, however, is rarely put in practice."

"And, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven." "Fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands." These quicksands were the Syrtis Major to the south-east of Clauda, so that unless means were taken to alter the course of the ship to the north or north-west, they would assuredly be wrecked upon them.

"Strake sail." Almost all expositors (Smith, Howson, the Revisers) of the Greek text translate this "lowered the gear," and by gear is meant not all the sails, so that the vessel should drift like a mere log before the wind, but that it should have sufficient sail to catch the wind, but not enough to be overpowered, and perhaps capsized by it. I give below in a note for those who wish to go into minute particulars, Mr. Smith's account of the steps which, apparently, they must have taken.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "I have already shown that the same wind which drove them when yielding to it, to Clauda, would, if they had continued to scud, have driven them directly towards the Syrtis. Under the circumstances in which they were now placed, they had but one course to pursue, in order to avoid the apprehended danger, which was to turn the ship's head off shore, and to set such sail as the violence of the wind would permit them to carry. As they did avoid the danger, we may be certain, notwithstanding the silence of the historian, that this was the course which was adopted. I have already assigned my reasons for supposing that the ship must have been brought to on the starboard tack, under Clauda, for it was only on this tack that it was possible to avoid being driven on the

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;

\* Jonah i. 5. 19 And the third *day* ° we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

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19. "We cast out with our own hands." So H., L., P., most Cursives, Syriac, Copt., Eth., &c.; but N., A., B., some fifteen Cursives, Vulg., Arm., read, "they cast out with their own hands."

"And so were driven." Not in the direction of the wind; that would be on the Syrtes, but towards the north-west, and so in the direction of Adria.

18. "And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened," &c. No doubt by throwing overboard some of the freight, and all things of any weight.

The imperfect being used, it is properly translated as in the Revision, "they began to throw the freight overboard."

19. "And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship." "The tackling," rather, perhaps, the furniture. We use the word "tackling" to describe what is comparatively light in weight, but is necessary for the navigation.

There is a difference of reading here. Some MSS. reading "they," i.e., the crew, "cast out with their own hands;" but why should it be noticed at all if it was the work of the crew? They could not well cast anything into the sea except by hand, but if the passengers agreed to cast out with their own hands their own fur-

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African coast. When, therefore, they had taken every precaution against foundering, which prudent and skilful seamanship could dictate, all that was required was to fill their storm sail, probably already set, and to stand on. The question remains to be answered, what is the meaning of the expression, 'lowering the gear,' *χαλαρώνει τὸ σκεῦος*? *Σκεῦος*, which I have translated literally "gear," when applied to a ship, means appurtenances of every kind, such as spars, sails, rigging, anchors, and cables, &c. Now every ship situated as this one was, when preparing for a storm, sends down upon deck the 'top hamper,' or gear connected with the fair-weather sails, such as the suppara, or top sails. A modern ship sends down top-gallant masts and yards, a cutter strikes her topmast, when preparing for a gale. . . . We may conclude with perfect certainty that their object in 'lowering the gear,' was to enable them to avoid the Syrtes, because we are, in effect, told that it was so, 'fearing lest they should be driven to the Syrtes, they lowered the gear.' This alone, however, was not sufficient to have kept the ship off a lee shore. There were but two ways in which that could have been effected. She might have been anchored, or her head might have been turned off shore, and such sail set as the violence of the gale would permit her to carry. We know that the first of the alternatives (the anchoring) was not adopted; we must therefore conclude that the last was, for by no other way could she have avoided the apprehended danger" (pp. 68-70).

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

23 ' For there stood by me this night the angel <sup>f ch. xxiii. 11.</sup> of God, whose I am, and <sup>g Dan. vi. 18.</sup> whom I serve, <sup>Rom. i. 9.</sup>

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be <sup>2 Tim. i. 3.</sup>

niture, then it was worthy to be noticed as showing the extreme anxiety manifested by all for the safety of the vessel.

20. "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared . . . taken away." Before the discovery that the magnetic needle points northwards, the only means of directing the ship was by the position of the sun and stars in the heavens; but the blackness of the tempest having hidden these, they were tossed about they knew not whither, in a ship ready to go to pieces.

21. "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said," &c. "Long abstinence." It is doubtful whether this was abstinence, or fasting from religious motives—each one, as in the ship of Jonah, fasting and calling upon his God—or whether, owing to the extreme fear and distress no one had any inclination to eat.

"Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete." Paul here speaks as one who had spoken before, not in his own name, but in that of God, when at Fair havens he had bidden them desist from going further on their voyage.

"To have gained." Rather "to have gotten this harm and loss," or, which amounts to the same thing, "have avoided this harm and loss." Already the ship was a wreck and a great part of the freight and valuables had been thrown into the sea.

22, 23, 24. "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer . . . all them that sail with thee." God works by means. It was needful that their hopes should be kept up if they were to do their duty in

brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

<sup>h</sup> Luke i. 45.  
<sup>l</sup> Rom. iv. 20, 21.  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. i. 12.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: <sup>h</sup>for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

<sup>1</sup> ch. xxviii. 1. 26 Howbeit <sup>1</sup>we must be cast upon a certain island.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were

the vessel, or she would have foundered long before they came to "a certain creek with a shore."

"Thou must be brought before Cæsar." The angel reminds him of the promise of Christ that he should witness to Him before Cæsar, and then tells him of what God had decreed in answer to his prayers for all in the vessel, that God had given to him all that sailed with him. Considering the love which Paul had for all souls for whom Christ died, this seems to assure us that something more was meant than escape from a death by shipwreck; for it had been better for them to have perished by shipwreck than to have been spared to live lives at enmity with God. Must we not believe that the words must be taken in the sense in which assuredly St. Paul would desire them to be understood, that God had given to him all these souls, so that in due time they should believe the Gospel, and repent and turn to God and persevere in good works, so that in an infinitely greater wreck, the wreck of worlds, they should be by the side of Paul as sharers in his salvation?

25. "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God," &c. I believe God. The assertion of faith in the speaker breeds faith in those who hear. The men who are listened to are those who speak with confidence. Only they must take heed that they are on the side of God, and obey Him, or else they have no ground for confidence—their seeming confidence is presumption.

26. "Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island." This could only be said by revelation—by the spirit of prophecy—for no one in the ship knew in the least whereabouts they were.

27. "But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down," &c. The fourteenth night, reckoning from the day in which they started from the Fair havens. During these

driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country ;

28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks,

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fourteen days they had been driven before the storm five hundred miles.

“ In Adria.” This does not mean what we call the Adriatic or Gulf of Venice, but the large space of open sea bounded by the south of Italy on the North, Greece and Crete on the east, and Sicily and Malta on the west.

“ The shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country.” Probably their experienced ears discerned the sound of breakers. Mr. Smith has shown that the land near St. Paul’s Bay, in Malta, is so low, that in a stormy sea it would be entirely hidden from those in a ship at a little distance, and nothing would be seen but the dashing of the breakers and thin white foam. If the night was not altogether dark, they might discern this white line.

28. “ And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone,” &c. Of course this showed that the bottom of the sea below them was shelving from land—how near it might be they knew not, and so the ship might strike against hidden reefs and go to pieces.

29. “ Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors,” &c. “ The ships of the ancients had both ends alike, so that there was nothing in their form to prevent this mode of anchoring being put in practice. From the position of the ship’s head, the breakers must have been seen over the lee-bow. Their only chance of safety, therefore, was to anchor, but to do so successfully in a gale of wind on a lee-shore, requires not only time for preparation, but holding ground of extraordinary tenacity.” In St. Paul’s Bay the anchorage is thus described in the sailing directions:—“ The harbour of St. Paul’s is open to easterly and north-east winds. It is, notwithstanding, safe for small ships, the ground generally being very good ; and, while the cables hold, there is no danger, as the anchors will never start.”

“ Four anchors.” Besides, there was another advantage of

they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

anchoring from the stern. They intended to run the ship ashore, and by this mode of anchoring she was naturally driven by the wind with her prow in the direction of the shore.<sup>1</sup>

“And wished for the day.” Rather, “prayed for day.” The day would of course break at its appointed time, but that would not prevent all those who believed that there was a heaven above, from uttering such ejaculations as, God grant that it were day!

30. “And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had,” &c. They pretended that it was necessary that the ship should be anchored at both ends, but they could not make it safe unless they dropped the anchors at some distance a-head. As Mr. Blunt well describes the matter: “The vessel being already anchored by the stern, an anchor dropped into the sea from her bows could have gained no hold on the bottom, because the ship could not drift. It would, therefore, be necessary to carry out the anchor as far as the length of cable would allow, and then haul in the latter until a hold had been obtained.

31. “Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, Except these abide,” &c. God works by means. He had promised that the lives of all in the ship should be spared, but apparently He made this contingent upon the ship being run aground in a certain place close to shore, and in order to bring this about, they must perform the operations described in verse 40, which only sailors could do.

32. “Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.” In this was shown their confidence in the Apostle. He

<sup>1</sup> All the commentators, following Smith, notice that at both the battle of the Nile, and that of Copenhagen, the ships were anchored from the stern. “There is still greater interest in quoting the instance of the battle of Copenhagen, not only from the accounts we have of the precision with which each ship let go her anchors astern, as she arrived nearly opposite her appointed station, but because it is said that Nelson stated after the battle that he had that morning been reading Acts xxvii.”

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for <sup>k</sup> there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings i. 52.  
Matt. x. 30.  
Luke xiii. 7. &  
xxi. 18.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took

warned them at the first of the danger of the voyage, and they paid no attention—now they perceived the ill-faith of the sailors, and without a moment's delay they acted on his advice.

33, 34. And while the day was coming on . . . the head of any of you."

"Continued fasting." This can scarcely mean having taken no food at all. It must mean having taken no food worth speaking of—insufficient food, and that only by the merest snatches.

"This is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall," &c. If they were all on the point of going down, food was useless, but if, as St. Paul believed, from the promise of God, they would all be cast ashore alive and well, they must take some food, that they might not crawl to land utterly faint and exhausted.

35. "And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all," &c. It is supposed by most commentators that St. Paul desired to set them an example of giving thanks before taking food, but this is very unlikely, for both Jews and heathen always did this.<sup>1</sup> Some, however, seem to be feeling their way to a higher view, as Dean Plumptre, who says, "The act of breaking bread, though in itself not more than the natural incident of such a meal, must, at least, have reminded the few Christians who were his companions of the more solemn "breaking of bread" with which they were familiar.

It seems to me that the historian means to record an Eucharistic

<sup>1</sup> Some early Christian apologist, I cannot at this time say who it is, has a passage concerning the discord introduced into heathen households, even at their meals, by one member of the family invoking one heathen god, and another another, and then there was quarrelling, even so far as to come to blows, because they would not yield.



bread, and 'gave thanks to God in presence of them all:

1 1 Sam. ix. 13. and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

Matt. xv. 36.

Mark viii. 6.

John vi. 11.

1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

act, not perhaps a formal one, but one as near to an actual Eucharist as the circumstances would allow, for those unique terms are used, which are only used elsewhere to mark the Eucharist, such as our Lord *taking* bread,—“he took bread,” (Matt. xxvi. 26). Then it is said, “He gave thanks to God in presence of them all,” the word being the same used by St. Paul himself with reference to the Eucharistic action of the Lord over the bread (1 Cor. xi. 24). And lastly, it is said that he broke it (*κλάσας*), before he began to eat, the term used for the celebration of the Eucharist in Acts ii. 42 and xx. 11. Now the taking of bread and the breaking it are the most ordinary operations at every meal. Any one who wishes to eat bread which is on the table before him, must take it into his hands, and if the piece of bread is too large to be eaten at once he must break it; and if he is at all a religious person, he must have given thanks at the commencement, not for the bread only, but for the whole meal. Now why should all this be so circumstantially recorded? For but one reason that I can see—to tell us that St. Paul here performed as nearly as circumstances would allow, the characteristic outward act of worship of the Christian religion. For that act is a taking of bread of so solemn a character, that it ought to be expressly mentioned, a thanksgiving of a far higher kind than a common grace before meats, and a breaking which is never associated in the New Testament except with the bread of the Eucharist, or that which is plainly typical of it in the miraculous feeding of the multitudes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are two uses of bread as food mentioned throughout the New Testament:

1. The ordinary use as common food. In this case it is used in connection with the word “eat,” as in Matt. xv. 2; “When they eat bread;” (Luke vii. 33) “John came neither eating bread;” (xiv. 1) “He went into the house to eat bread;” (xiv. 15) “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God.”

2. The extraordinary use in the Eucharist. In this it is always to break bread. “Jesus took bread and brake it;” “They continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread;” (Acts ii. 42); “When the disciples came together to break bread” (Acts xx. 7); “The bread which we break, is it not the Communion?” (1 Cor. x. 16). There is one remarkable exception which, when duly considered, proves the rule. This is when the terms “taking bread,” “ blessing,” “ looking up to heaven,” and “ breaking,” are applied to the bread miraculously produced for the people in the wilderness. This bread is the special type of the Eucharistic bread, and the Lord's whole action a preparation for it.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen <sup>m</sup> souls.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but

<sup>m</sup> ch. ii. 41. &  
vii. 14. Rom.  
xiii. 1. 1 Pet.  
iii. 20.

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For what purpose then, did St. Paul "do this"? We answer, in order to plead the Lord's death for the salvation, in the highest sense, of all present, and in order to thank God for having brought them all at last so close to land, that there was every probability, God helping, that they would get on shore. The Eucharist being the anamnesis, or memorial, of the Death of Christ, associates prayers, thanksgivings, and intercessions, with that Death.

36. "Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat." This verse affords another proof that St. Paul's action was Eucharistic. For it is not said that he gave them of the bread (*ἄρτον*) which he brake, but that they also took some meat, or food (*τροφῆς*), a different word altogether, implying that what he eat in the most religious Christian act, and what they took, were different. There would be no reason for marking the distinction, except that he did not proffer to them that which was blessed, or, as we say, consecrated.

37. "And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls." Some of the ships then navigating the Mediterranean Sea carried many more passengers; the one in which Josephus was wrecked carried six hundred.

38. "And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out," &c. Some (amongst them Alford) suppose that by "wheat" (*τὸν σῖτον*) the remainder of the ship's provisions is meant, but to suppose that they had such a quantity remaining as would lighten the ship, is quite inconsistent with the previous abstinence; and, besides, wheat was the staple commodity imported from Alexandria into Italy. (Smith.)

39. "And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered," &c. The fact that Alexandrian sailors knew not the land has been made a difficulty, but instead of this it bears rather

they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

|| Or, cut the anchors, they left them in the sea, &c.

40 And when they had || taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

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39. "To thrust in." B., C., Copt., Arm., read, "to save."

the stamp of truth, for the only land that they would know would be that about Valetta, far from this, St. Paul's Bay being a place with which no vessels, except very small craft, would have any business.

39. "But they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which," &c. "Creek with a shore," *i.e.*, with a sandy beach on which they could run the the ship aground, which they could not do if the creek had rocky and precipitous sides.

40. "And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea," &c. This ought rather to be rendered, "and when they had cut the anchors they left them in the sea," in order that the vessel might not be encumbered by their weight.

"And loosed the rudder bands." "And at the same time (*ἕμα*, left untranslated in the authorized) loosed the rudder bands." Ancient ships were steered by two large paddles, one on each quarter. When anchored by the stern in a gale it would be necessary to lift them out of the water, and secure them by lashings or rudder bands, and to loose the rudder bands when the ship was again got under way.

"And hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made towards shore." The word translated mainsail (*ἀπρέμων*) according to Smith was certainly the foresail, not the mainsail; "a sailor," he says, "will at once see that the foresail was the best possible sail that could be set under the circumstances." At page 151, in his Dissertation on "The Ships of the Ancients," he gives the figure of a ship in full sail in which both sails, mainsail and foresail, are unfurled. The reader will see that the foresail, or smaller sail, would catch just sufficient wind to lead the ship gently forward against the part of the beach on which they wished to run her aground.

41. "And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, <sup>2</sup> they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, <sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 25. and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

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41. "Of the waves." So C., H., L., P., all Cursives, Syriac, Copt., Æth., Vulg.; but N A., B., omit "of the waves"—"was broken by the violence" giving an incomplete sense.

ship aground," &c. The spot marked by tradition as that in which the ship was wrecked exactly answers to this description. A small island called Salmonetta at its west end almost touches the shore, having a narrow channel, perhaps two hundred yards broad, between it and the mainland. The ship met the sea running between this island and the shore, and ran aground half way between the extremity of the island, and a small promontory jutting out from the mainland which formed the southern side of the small creek with the sandy beach.

"And the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable." "This," Mr. Smith says, "is a remarkable circumstance, which, but for the peculiar nature of the bottom of St. Paul's Bay, it would be difficult to account for. The rocks of Malta disintegrate into very minute particles of sand and clay, which, when acted on by the currents, or by surface agitation, form a deposit of tenacious clay: but in still water, when these causes do not act, mud is found; but it is only in the creeks where there are no currents, and at such a depth as to be undisturbed by the waves, that the mud occurs. In Captain Smyth's chart of the bay, the nearest soundings to the mud indicate a depth of about three fathoms, which is about what a large ship would draw. A ship, therefore, impelled by the force of a gale into a creek with a bottom such as that laid down on the chart, would strike a bottom of mud graduating into tenacious clay, into which the fore part would fix itself and be held fast, whilst the stern was exposed to the force of the waves." (Page 104.)

42. "And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, . . . get to land." This was done from motives of self-preservation. If any of the prisoners had escaped, the soldiers in whose custody they were would have had to answer for it with their lives. (See note on xii. 18, 19.)

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:

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43, 44. "But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose." Not merely "willing," but "desirous." He seems to have formed a strong friendship for the Apostle during the fearful fourteen days in which they had been companions in adversity.

"And commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves," &c. This was done that those who could get ashore by swimming might help the others who had hold of the boards and pieces of wood which were broken from the ship as the hinder part went to pieces. Very probably the Apostle was amongst the swimmers, as it was his fourth shipwreck.

"And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land." This was by a conjunction of special providences as supernatural as any miracle, though no actual visible miracle was wrought.

They had to use all earthly natural means. They had to undergird, or *frap* the ship (17), to lower the gear (17), to lighten the ship (18), to cast out the tackling with their own hands (19), to sound and sound again to see if they were nearing any shore (28), to cast anchors out of the stern (29), to prevent the sailors, the only persons who could work the ship, escaping (31), to cast the wheat into the sea (38), to cut away the anchors (40), to loose the rudder bands, and to hoist the foresail. And yet God must have worked with them in the control of the elements. A little more violence of the wind and they would have been driven on the Syrtes, or gone to pieces in Adria. God must have revealed to Paul the design of the sailors; He must have so directed winds and currents that they were not driven on rocks, or on the dangerous foul ground in the middle of St. Paul's Bay [see chart in Smith], or on ground on which the whole ship would have perished, instead of the forepart remaining immovable, and so allowing the gradual escape of so large a number of persons. He must have so ordered the influence of Julius, that it withheld the soldiers from their purpose. "Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

One question may be asked. Is this voyage and shipwreck typical? Is the ship the Church, the crew the elect, the typhonic wind the assault of the enemy, the raging waves the world of

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, ° that ° ver. 22. they escaped all safe to land.

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unbelievers? We know not. The storms which the Church has weathered, the violence of heresies, the irruption of the barbarians, the conquests by the followers of the false prophet, even the French Revolution—none of these seem to come up to the destructive violence of the storm here portrayed. What God has in store we know not, but if such a storm awaits the Church, may we be in that forepart which remains immovable, and not on that hinder part which is broken by the violence of the waves.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

**A**ND when they were escaped, then they knew that ° the island was called Melita. ° ch. xxvii. 2a.

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1. "And when they were escaped, then they knew." So H., L., P., and most Cursives; but N, A., B., C., 13, 61, 68, 137, Vulg., Syriac, Copt., Arm., read, "when we were escaped we knew."

"Melita." So N, A., C., H., L., all Cursives, Syriac; but B. and the Cod. Amiat. and Arm., read, "Melitene," a manifest blunder, which do doubt arose from the scribe adding the three next letters, H, N, H, of the next words, ἡ νῆσος τοῦ Μελίτη. Neither Malta nor any other island in the Mediterranean was ever called Melitene; but there was a Melitene of some importance in the fourth century, as being the Metropolitan see of Armenia. I should not have noticed this reading except for the circumstance that it is read into the text of Professors Westcott and Hort. On what grounds they can adopt so manifest a blunder of some early scribe as a part of the sacred text I cannot tell. They give no reason, but it is clear that when St. Paul's companions landed they did not know that the island was called Melitene.

1. "And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita." A Phœnician island, apparently first discovered and colonized by the Carthaginians, and taken by the Romans in the second Punic war, B.C. 242.

The reasons assigned for the place being a small island far up the Gulf of Venice, nearly opposite to Ravenna, are too absurd to be noticed.

2 And the <sup>b</sup> barbarous people showed us no little kindness :

<sup>b</sup> Rom. i. 14. for they kindled a fire, and received us every one,  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. xiv. 11. because of the present rain, and because of the  
 Col. iii. 11. cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

2. "And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness, for they kindled," &c. "Barbarous" here does not mean uncivilized, but rather, not speaking Greek. Thus, in Rom. i. 14, Paul classes all men into Greeks and barbarians.

3. "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire," &c. The viper could not have been amongst the loose sticks which it is supposed Paul gathered; indeed probably was not, but in those amongst which the fire was spreading, and it laid hold of his hand as he was arranging the faggots which he had gathered, so that they should the sooner catch fire.

It has been objected to this account that there are no vipers in Malta, and no wood to gather up. But how can people have the face to assert what was, or was not there, 1,800 years ago? The extract, which I give in a note from Lewin's "Life of St. Paul," seems to dispose of the question.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "It has been objected to this account (1) that there is no wood in Malta except at Bosquetta; and (2) that there are no vipers in Malta. How then, it is said, could the Apostle have collected the sticks, and how could a viper have fastened on his hand? But when I visited the Bay of St. Paul in 1851 by sea, I observed trees growing in the vicinity, and there were also fig-trees growing amongst the rocks at the water's edge, where the vessel was wrecked. But there is a better explanation still. When I was again at Malta in 1853, I went with two companions to the Bay of St. Paul by land, and this was at the same season of the year as when the wreck occurred. We now noticed on the shore just opposite the scene of the wreck, eight or nine stacks of small faggots, and in the nearest stack I counted twenty-four bundles. They consisted of a kind of thorny heather, and had evidently been cut for firewood. As we strolled about, my companions (whom I had quitted to make an observation), put up a viper, or a reptile having the appearance of one, which escaped into the bundles of sticks. It may not have been poisonous, but was like an adder, and was quite different from the common snake. One of my fellow-travellers was quite familiar with the difference between snakes and adders, and could not well be mistaken. After all, therefore, it may be found that vipers, though rare, still exist at Malta. Assuming, however, that there are none at the present day, the objection is of little weight, for vipers are common enough in Sicily, and no doubt more so originally in the adjacent isle of Malta, but Malta (which is now more densely peopled than any other

4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

c Mark xvi. 18.  
Luke x. 19.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they

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4. "And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand," &c. It is very doubtful whether the Apostle was now chained to the soldier who kept him, so that the people entertained this view of him as a great criminal simply from the incident here mentioned; for no doubt they thought that his having been bitten by a serpent rising out of the fire, shewed this.

"Whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." They personified vengeance as a Deity, Ἡ Δίκη, the same as Nemesis; but it is not at all improbable that these islanders, being Phœnicians, and so using a Hebrew dialect, called her דיקה, Justice; but the Greeks, having no such letter as the *ϛ*, dropped it, so that it became sdikah, or dikah. This removes the difficulty that Phœnician islanders should use the name of a Greek Deity of so abstract a character.

5. "And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm." In this was literally fulfilled the promise of the Saviour. "They shall take up serpents" (Mark xvi. 18), and also that in Luke x. 19: "Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy."

6. "Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly." The commentators notice that the bite of one of the most deadly serpents of Africa, the Prestes, spreads inflammation almost instantaneously over the whole body.

"After they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him," &c. So after the healing of the cripple at Lystra the ignorant

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part of Europe, and contains 1,200 persons to the square mile), has for many centuries been under such a state of high artificial cultivation, that vipers might well be exterminated from a narrow space, twenty miles by twelve, just as wolves have been from Great Britain."



4 ch. xiv. 11. changed their minds, and <sup>d</sup>said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and <sup>e</sup>prayed, and <sup>f</sup>laid his hands on him, and healed him.

<sup>e</sup> James v. 14, 15.  
<sup>f</sup> Mark vi. 5.  
& vii. 32. &  
xvi. 18. Luke  
iv. 40. ch. xix.  
11, 12. 1 Cor.  
xiii. 9, 28.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

<sup>g</sup> Matt. xv. 6.  
1 Tim. v. 17.

10 Who also honoured us with many <sup>g</sup>honours; and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things as were necessary.

people deified the Apostle as Mercury, and his companion Barnabas as Jupiter.

7. "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the islands," &c. This is another instance of St. Luke's accuracy. The term *Πρωτος*, or Primate was, as appears from an inscription found at Civita Vecchia, an official title of the resident governor of the island. He was under the Proconsul of Sicily. His name of Publius shows that he was of a Roman family.

8. "And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever," &c. Literally, "he lay sick of fevers (in the plural) and dysentery." I shall give a short excursus at the end of this volume respecting St. Luke's use of medical terms, showing indisputably that anyone who expressed himself in such technical language must have been educated as a physician.

"And prayed and laid his hands on him." Here we have two promises of God fulfilled. 1. That by the Holy Ghost, through St. James, "the prayer of faith shall save the sick" (v. 15); 2, that of the Lord, "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 18).

9, 10. "So when this was done, others also . . . such things as were necessary." "Who also honoured us with many honours."

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to

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I do not think that these "honours" mean gifts in the way of honoraria, the Latin name of the physician's fee, though similar payment may be the meaning in 1 Tim. v. 17. Such things, tendered of course not as payment, but in token of gratitude, are mentioned in the latter part of the verse, "they laded us with such things as were necessary." The honours would be processions to tender thanks and such titles of respect as poor rude islanders could bestow.

11. "And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria." "A ship of Alexandria." The same stress of weather which had wrecked the Alexandrian ship of St. Paul, had compelled this second ship from the same Egyptian port to winter in the island. The fact of this vessel having wintered in the island is a clear proof that this Malta was the one to the south of Sicily, and not the one in the upper Adriatic on the Dalmatian coast.

"Whose sign was Castor and Pollux." Literally the Dioscuri. Castor and Pollux were the tutelary deities of mariners (Eur. Hel., 1664, Catullus I. iv. 36) till superseded by St. Nicholas; and the vessel had their image on the prow, as giving name to the ship, and probably, also, at the stern, where the tutelary deity had its place. These names were given to the meteoric lights (Hor. Od. I. xii. 28) in the Mediterranean, now denominated St. Peter and St. Elmo.

It is difficult to account for St. Luke mentioning the sign of this ship, and not that of others. May it not be to assure Christians in after time that they may freely use heathen names, if there be no approach to idolatry involved in it, as the names of months, of days of the week, and of places and ships.

12. "And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days." Syracuse was about 100 miles to the north of Malta. It has been suggested, that as Malta was in the province of Sicily, the vessel might have been detained there a short time on business, the superior officer of Publius having his headquarters there.

13. "And from thence we fetched a compass and came to

Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three

Rhegium." Rhegium, now Reggio, a city on the west side or Italian side of the Straits of Sicily.

"We fetched a compass," *i.e.*, we went a little round about—not by a straight course, but tacking, the wind not being favourable, for it is added that after one day the south wind (of course a favourable one for those sailing to Puteoli) sprung up.

"And we came the next day to Puteoli." Puteoli, now well known as Pozzuoli, a town beautifully situated in a sheltered nook of the bay of Naples. Ships from Egypt and Syria touched here that their passengers might finish their journey to Rome on land. In the narrative of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius, written about fifty years after St. Paul's journey to Rome, it is recorded that when Puteoli came in sight, he was eager to disembark there, desiring to tread in the footsteps of the Apostle, but, a gale springing up, he was unable to do so, and the ship carried him on to Ostia, the port of Rome.

14. "Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days." With what objects of surpassing interest, with what natural beauties, with what number of places associated with prehistoric traditions, were they surrounded, and yet none of these are mentioned. The one thing which detained St. Paul there was a handful of Christians, probably Jewish ones. The words in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "They of Italy salute you," implies that there were churches in Italy besides that of Rome.

15. "And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as," &c. Appii Forum, a station marked in the Itinerary as about thirty-three miles from Rome. Some, however, make it considerably more,<sup>1</sup> the Tres Tabernæ about 10 miles less.<sup>1</sup> Cicero dates one of his letters thence, and says that he had

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find in the notes to Lewin's "Life" (p. 223), notices of the various

taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but <sup>b</sup> Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that <sup>a</sup> ch. xxiv. 25. & xxvii. 3. kept him.

16. "The centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard." So H., L., P., some twenty-five Curiaes; but N., A., B., Vulg., Syriac, Copt., Arm., omit the sentence.

sent off another from the Three Taverns. (Cicero to Atticus, ii. 10.)

The brethren had, no doubt, notice from Puteoli that St. Paul was on his way. Their numbers and affectionate eagerness to meet him were such, that on seeing them, "he thanked God, and took courage."

16. "And when we came to Rome, . . . with a soldier that kept him." The captain of the guard at this time was, probably, Burrhus, if St. Paul arrived in Rome in the spring of A.D. 61—in the spring of 62 Burrhus died. He was the friend and colleague of Seneca, and it is conjectured that through him Paul became acquainted with that philosopher.

"Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." This comparative freedom was, no doubt, owing to the letters received from Festus respecting his innocence, and the very favourable report of him which Julius would give to Burrhus.

17-19. "And it came to pass, that after three days . . . ought to accuse my nation of." Paul called the chief of the Jews together,

measurements of the Appian way, all differing from one another. The stations, or halting places, would be:

Puteoli to Cumæ.

Liturnum.

Sinuessa, thence in the Appian way.

Minturnæ.

Formiæ.

Fundi.

Terracina.

From this point they might rather take the circuitous road by land round the Pomptine Marshes, or traverse the canal in a direct line in a track boat drawn by mules . . . which of the two routes Julius adopted we are not informed, but both road and canal meet at Appii Forum, a small town eighteen miles from Terracina, "rife with insolent bargemen and exorbitant victuallers." (Hor. Sat., i., 5-4.)

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, <sup>1</sup> though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet <sup>2</sup> was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

<sup>1</sup> ch. xxii. 24. & xxiv. 10. & xxv. 8. & xxvi. 31.

18 Who, <sup>1</sup> when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

<sup>2</sup> ch. xxv. 11.

19 But when the Jews spake against *it*, <sup>3</sup> I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

<sup>3</sup> ch. xxvi. 6, 7.

<sup>4</sup> ch. xxvi. 29. Eph. iii. 1. & iv. 1. & vi. 20. 2 Tim. i. 16. & ii. 9. Philem. x. 13.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that <sup>5</sup> for the hope of Israel I am bound with <sup>6</sup> this chain.

for this was according to his invariable rule—to announce the Gospel “to the Jews first.”

“I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers.” This is to be remembered against those who represent the Apostle as a sort of dissenter from his paternal religion, everywhere making it his first business to undermine it. Here he asserts that he had committed nothing against the customs of the fathers, and indeed this was not likely if, as at Cenchræa, he took upon him the vow of a Nazarite. He adhered religiously to all the traditional customs, but he as religiously resisted their imposition on the Gentiles.

“I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar.” This he did in order to avoid being taken to Jerusalem and murdered there by the conspirators against his life.

20. “For this cause therefore have I called for you . . . for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.” The hope of Israel, *i. e.*, the Messiah, and the Messiah suffering and rising again from the dead: for this is that which the Apostle set forth as the fulfil-

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where <sup>p</sup>it is spoken against.

p Luke ii. 34.  
ch. xxiv. 5, 1a.  
1 Pet. ii. 12. &  
iv. 14.

ment of Israel's hopes. "The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again" (xiii. 32, 33). St. Paul gloried in this chain—in these bonds. "My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace," "supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Phil. i. 13, 16). "I am an ambassador in bonds" (Ephes. vi. 20), "remember my bonds" (Coloss. iv. 18).

21. "And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee." The authorities in Jerusalem could not have sent letters or messengers accusing Paul unless they had come by the same ship by which he arrived, which, considering the three changes of vessels, would have been next to impossible; all communication by sea having been suspended during the winter months, and St. Paul having been put under the care of Julius most probably before the Jewish priests knew of the step.

22. "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect," &c. This seems to show more candour, and less prejudice, than the Jews elsewhere exhibited. Knowing that the Apostle was the foremost amongst Christians they yet desired to hear all he had to say.

"Everywhere spoken against." This seems to imply that the detestable calumnies against the Christians had begun to be already rife. Tacitus, a contemporary historian, speaks of them as "holding a pernicious superstition," and "guilty of atrocious and shameful crimes, convicted of hatred to mankind." Suetonius also speaks of them as "addicted to a new and mischievous superstition." Justin Martyr the apologist, living within a century after this, speaks of these calumnies as being mainly due to the Jews, and circulated by them at the first: "Other nations have not inflicted this wrong on us and on Christ to such an extent as you have, for you are in very deed the authors of the wicked prejudice against the Just One and against us, who hold by Him. After you

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging: "to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, ' both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

q Luke xxiv.  
27. ch. xvii.  
3. & xix. 8.

r See on ch.  
xxvi. 6, 22.

s ch. xiv. 4. &  
xvii. 4. & xix. 9.

24 And \*some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

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had crucified Him, the only blameless and righteous man . . . . You sent out chosen men from Jerusalem throughout all the land to tell that the godless and lawless heresy of the Christians had sprung up, and to publish those things which all they who know us not speak against us" (Dial. Trypho. xvii.).

23, 24. "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many," &c. The "expounding" and "testifying" would be respecting the meaning and application of Jewish prophecy—that the Messiah should be like Moses, a Mediator and the Introducer of a dispensation or spiritual kingdom—that He should suffer and reign after suffering (as in Psalm xxii.)—that His sufferings should be atoning and reconciling (as in Isaiah liii.)—that He should not be a priest cut off by death and succeeded by another, but an everlasting priest. In all probability, if we had his discourse, students of prophecy would pronounce it the most elementary possible, but the Jews required the first elements.

24. "And some believed . . . some believed not." One would gather from the next three verses that only a small number believed, compared to the number of those who rejected the Gospel.

This account of Jewish belief and unbelief is, in reality, the account of what takes place in every proclamation of the Gospel. As far as we can gather from the accounts of our missionaries, in no case is the Gospel at once received by all who hear it. And it is the same in our Christian congregations, and in our parishes. Measuring the effect of the Gospel by the reception of the blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, and by lives in some sort answering to the reception of such a means of grace, it may be said of almost every church in the land, "Some believe, and some believe not; only we may perhaps word it, "Some realize and some do not." "Some take it to heart and some do not." "Some are perma-

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

26 Saying, 'Go unto this people, and say, Is. vi. 9. Jer. v. 21. Ezek. xii. 2. Matt. xiii. 14, 15. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Rom. xi. 8.  
Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand:  
and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

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25. "Unto our fathers." So H., L., P., most Cursives, Vulg., Copt., Arm.; but N, A., B., many Cursives, Syriac, &c., read, "your fathers."

nently changed, and some not." "Some repent unto life, and some do not."

25-27. "And when they agreed not among themselves they departed . . . I should heal them." St. Paul here quotes the same passage of Isaiah respecting the hardened state of the Jews as our Lord did, when He began His teaching by parables. (Matt. xiii. 14, 15.). I have so fully examined the meaning of this prophecy in my notes on St. Matthew, that I can but now refer to what I have there written. It will be only necessary to remark here that St. Paul, quoting the Septuagint, speaks of the blindness and dulness of hearing of the Jews as entirely their own fault—as brought on them by their own determined closing of their eyes and shutting their ears to the truth.

Now for what reason does he quote this passage of Isaiah? Evidently for this reason, to show that the hardness of heart of the Jews in rejecting the Gospel was no argument against that Gospel, but a thing to be expected from the moral and religious state of the nation. It had occurred once before, and it might occur again, if the Jews were, as in former times, so perverse and obstinate as to close their eyes to God's light, and their ears to God's offers of mercy. It might stagger those Jews who were inclined to receive the Gospel that the mass of their fellow-countrymen, headed by the priests and the scribes and Pharisees (the leaders of religion) rejected it. "Let this," St. Paul replies, "be no stumbling-block. If God,



28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent "unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxi.  
41, 43. ch. xliii.  
46, 47. & xviii.  
6. & xxii. 21.  
& xxvi. 17, 18.  
Rom. xi. 11.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

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29. "And when he had said . . . reasoning among themselves." This whole verse omitted in N, A., B., E., 13, 40, 61, 68, Vulg. (Cod. Amiat.), &c.; but retained in H., L., P., most Cursives.

in righteous judgment at continued resistance to His calls, has given men up to themselves, they will reject the truth." This was the case with the then Jewish people, for so far from commending that truth of God, which they held, to the Gentiles, the Gentiles blasphemed God through them (Rom. ii. 24). It was thus with the Jews as it had been with the Gentiles whom they despised. God had originally given to them the knowledge of Himself. This knowledge they rejected. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and He "gave them over to a reprobate mind." The Jews had a higher knowledge and a purer worship. This they utterly failed to live up to, and obey, and so it was no preparation for them—the mass of them—to lead them to Christ, and they rejected the Son of God when He came.

28. "Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." The very same prophets who foretell the falling away and unbelief of the Jews, proclaim the reception of the Gospel on the part of the Gentiles. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light." "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." "All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord," &c.

29. "And when he had said these things, the Jews departed, and had," &c. This verse (if genuine) serves to show that for some reason the Jews in Rome were more candid and open to conviction than in most places. We are never, that I remember, elsewhere told that the Jews of any place discussed amongst themselves the evidences of the truth of the Gospel.

30. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all." "In his own hired house," rather in his own

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

Anno  
DOMINI  
65.

31 \* Preaching the kingdom of God, and teach-

\* ch. iv. 31.  
Eph. vi. 19.

hired lodging. A lodging-house at Rome was divided into *cænacula*, each of which was let out for hire. Very probably in his part there was a large room capable of containing a considerable congregation.

It has been said that, being a prisoner, he was not allowed to preach in the synagogues or in the churches. But surely he could go anywhere, provided he had the permission of the captain of the guard, who, of course, would require that the soldier to whom he was chained should accompany him.

“And received all that came in unto him.” That is, no doubt, Jew and Gentile alike. But he would receive all, no matter what their character, provided they came to him for spiritual purposes.

31. “Preaching the kingdom of God.” The first thing which both the forerunner of the Lord and the Lord Himself preached was the kingdom of God (Matt. iii. 2, iv. 23), and the last notice of the preaching of an Apostle was that it was “the kingdom of God” which he preached. I ask the reader to mark this. It was not abstract doctrine, it was not moral precept, it was not the mere Fatherhood of God, it was not a mere verbal Gospel, but it was a something which could be rightly and fitly called a kingdom—a number of men organized under rule, bound together by bands of an extraordinary character, as uniting them all in one mystical body under Christ their Head, having such watchwords as the creed, having discipline, having laws, having a feeling of brotherhood such as no body of men ever had before, having everything provided to ensure continuity. It was heavenly and yet on earth, spiritual and yet visible, Catholic and yet everywhere one and complete, having a Head in heaven, and His ministers on earth. Such was the kingdom which this Apostle preached.

“Teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus.” His equality with God in nature as His Son, His Incarnation, His obedience to the law, His miracles, His precepts, His all-atoning Death—above all, His Resurrection—the power of His Resurrection, and the Lordship of His Resurrection (Rom. xiv. 9), His Intercession, His Priesthood, His Baptism, the reception of His Body as essential to Church Unity (1 Cor. x. 17), His presence in His Church,

ing those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

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His action through His ministers, His faith as justifying, His hope as saving, His love as the most constraining of all influences.

“With all confidence.” Rather with all boldness, keeping nothing back because it might be distasteful or unpopular.

“No man forbidding him.” Never before had he proclaimed the truth for so long a period without hindrance or opposition. In fact, the seeming hindrance of his imprisonment was so ordered by God as to bring about the more rapid spread of the truth, as we read in his Epistle to the Philippians, written from Rome during these two years. “I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places. And many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. . . . What then, notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (i. 12, 18).

## EXCURSUS I.

### LIFE OF ST. PAUL FROM THE LAST NOTICE IN ACTS XXVIII. TO THE TIME OF HIS MARTYRDOM.

It will be needful to say a few words respecting the notices in Scripture and ecclesiastical writers respecting the last years of St. Paul's life. His imprisonment in Rome terminated about A.D. 62 or 63, and he was probably martyred in A.D. 68. During his imprisonment he wrote his Epistles to the Ephesians (probably a circular letter), to the Colossians, and (apparently quite at the close of his confinement) that to the Philippians, and that to Philemon. In the one he speaks hopefully of his speedy liberation (Phil. ii. 24): “I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly;” and in that to Philemon he asks him to prepare him a lodging (verse 22). It was evidently, then, his intention to visit the Churches which he

had planted in Asia, Macedonia, and Greece; and that he was allowed by God so to do seems evident from many scattered passages in the first Epistle to Timothy, and in that to Titus; but before we enter upon this, we must consider briefly two questions. The first is, at the termination of his first imprisonment, was he brought before Cæsar? The Lord Himself had told him in a vision that he should be (xxvii. 24), and though there is no account of it, it may have been so; for St. Luke was not with him to the end of his imprisonment, or when St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, or he (St. Luke) would most certainly have sent a greeting to the Philippian Christians amongst whom he had laboured. He probably declared the Gospel before Nero: the tyrant listened, and feeling that the words on the side of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come were such as he had never heard before, he dismissed him, and there being not the least ground for his further detention, ordered his liberation.

The next point is, when did he accomplish his long-expressed purpose of visiting Spain? There can be no doubt that he did so. All ecclesiastical history witnesses to his visiting places far to the westward of Rome, which places can be only Spain or Gaul, or perhaps Britain. Between A.D. 63 and 68, allowing the utmost time for re-visiting the scenes of his former labours, there was amply sufficient time for a missionary journey to Spain, and perhaps a year's sojourn there.

Respecting his journeyings eastward, he re-visited Ephesus, and went from thence to Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3). He purposed also to return to Ephesus, though he might be delayed (1 Tim. iii. 15; iv. 13). We learn from his Epistle to Titus that he had been to Crete, and left Titus there (i. 5); and, from the third chapter (verse 12), that he intended to winter in Nicopolis; but there was more than one city of that name. Chrysostom and Theodoret suppose it to have been one in Macedonia. The second Epistle to Timothy is that of a dying man, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. iv. 6). We gather from it that he had lately passed through Troas, doubtless on his way from Ephesus to Rome, and there had left a cloak and books; and no doubt on the same journey he had passed through Miletum, and there had left his companion Trophimus sick (2 Tim. iv. 13, 20).

This Epistle was written from Rome—from the city to which all ecclesiastical history points as the place of his martyrdom.

Thus the Scripture notices of the latter part of his life, after his first imprisonment, are so exceedingly few and fragmentary, that unless we receive the accounts told us in "Ecclesiastical History," we should not know that he died a martyr's death.

I shall now give what is said by ecclesiastical writers, and first by Eusebius. "Festus was sent by Nero as successor to Felix. Under him Paul, after having pleaded his cause, was sent a prisoner to Rome. But Aristarchus was his companion, whom he also, somewhere in his Epistles, calls his fellow-prisoner; and here Luke, that wrote the Acts of the Apostles, after showing that Paul passed two whole years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and that he preached the Gospel without restraint, brings his history to a close. After pleading his cause, he is said to have been sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and after a second visit to the city, that he finished his life with martyrdom. Whilst he was a prisoner, he wrote his second Epistle to Timothy, in which he both mentions his first defence, and his impending death. Hear, on these points, his own testimony respecting himself: "In my former defence no man was present with me, but all deserted me. May it not be laid to their charge. But the Lord was with me, and strengthened me, that through me the preaching of the Gospel might be fulfilled, and all the nations might hear it, and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth." He plainly intimates in these words: "On the former occasion he was rescued from the lion's mouth, that the preaching of the Gospel might be accomplished," that it was Nero to which he referred by this expression, as is probable on account of his cruelty. Therefore he did not subsequently subjoin any such expression as "he will rescue me from the lion's mouth," for he saw in spirit how near his approaching death was. Hence, after the expression, "and I was rescued from the lion's mouth," this also, "the Lord will rescue me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom," indicating the martyrdom that he would soon suffer; which he more clearly expresses in the same epistle, "for I am already poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand." And indeed in this second Epistle to Timothy, he shows that Luke alone was with him when he wrote, but at his former defence not even he; whence it is probable that Luke wrote his Acts of the Apostles about that time, continuing his history down to the time that he was with Paul. Thus much we have said, to show that the martyrdom of the Apostle did not take place

at that period of his stay at Rome when Luke wrote his history. It is indeed probable, that as Nero was more disposed to mildness at the beginning, the defence of the Apostle's doctrine would be more easily received; but as he advanced to such criminal excesses as to disregard all right, the Apostles also, with others, experienced the effect of the measures pursued against them ("Ecclesiastical History," bk. ii. chap. xxii.).

Again in book ii. chap. xxv.: "Thus Nero, publicly announcing himself as the chief enemy of God, was led on in his fury to slaughter the Apostles. Paul is therefore said to have been beheaded at Rome, and Peter to have been crucified under him (Nero). And this account is confirmed by the fact that the names of Peter and Paul still remain in the cemeteries of that city even to this day. But likewise a certain ecclesiastical writer, Caius by name, who was borne about the time of Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome, disputing with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian sect, gives the following statement respecting the places where the earthly tabernacles of the aforesaid Apostles are laid: "But I can show," says he, "the trophies of the Apostles. For if you will go to the Vatican, or to the Ostian road (Peter was buried in the Vatican, Paul in the Via Ostia), you will find the trophies of those who have laid the foundation of this Church. And that both suffered martyrdom about the same time, Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, bears the following testimony in his discourse addressed to the Romans, 'Thus likewise ye, by means of this admonition, have mingled the flourishing seed that had been planted by Peter and Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both of these having planted us at Corinth likewise instructed us, and having in like manner taught in Italy, they suffered martyrdom about the same time.' This testimony I have superadded in order that the truth of the history might be still more confirmed."

These are the only allusions in Eusebius. They amount to nothing more than that he finished his course in Rome by martyrdom.

Clement of Rome, St. Paul's contemporary, and afterwards bishop of Rome, writes an epistle to the Corinthians, of which the date cannot be later than A.D. 97. He thus mentions the latter years of the Apostle: "Owing to envy Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in

the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects" (Epistle i. ch. v.).

This expression, "suffered martyrdom under the prefects," is supposed to mean that it took place after the suicide of Nero, A.D. 68, and under the authority of Sabinus and Tigellinus, who administered the affairs of the empire till Galba assumed the purple.

With respect to the journey to Spain, this seems conclusive, for Clement was a contemporary and companion of St. Paul, and wrote from Rome, and so must have included Spain amongst "the extreme limits of the West."

The Muratorian fragment or Muratori's canon, which was compiled by some unknown person in or about A.D. 170, bears direct testimony to the fact of this journey. "Luke relates to Theophilus events of which he was an eye-witness, as also in a separate place (semote) he evidently declares the martyrdom of Peter, but (omits) the journey of Paul from Rome to Spain." Chrysostom also tells us that St. Paul, after his residence in Rome, departed to Spain (2 Tim. iv.); and Jerome: "Paul was dismissed by Nero, that he might preach Christ's Gospel in the West." (Hieron, Catal. Script.)

St. Paul having journeyed so far to the West, it is natural that British writers should claim him as the Evangelist of Britain; but the only testimony that I can find is one of a writer much too late to be relied on, viz., Theodoret, who writes (2 Tim. iv. 17): "The blessed Apostle St. Paul teaches us in a few words to how many nations he carried the Sacred Doctrine of the Gospel; so that from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum he fully preached the Gospel of Christ. He went also afterwards to Italy and Spain, and carried Salvation to the Islands which lie in the Ocean."

Tertullian twice alludes to his martyrdom: "Then is Peter girt by another, when he is made fast to the Cross. Then does Paul obtain a birth suited to Roman citizenship (decapitation), when in Rome he springs to life again, ennobled by martyrdom" (Scorpice, 15).

And again: "What a happy Church is that (of Rome) on which the Apostles poured out all their doctrines with all their blood; where Peter had a like Passion with the Lord; where Paul hath for his crown the same death with John (the Baptist); where the

Apostle John was plunged into boiling oil, and suffered nothing, and was afterwards banished to an island." (De Præscr. Hær., xiv. 86.)

## EXCURSUS II.

## MEDICAL PHRASEOLOGY OF ST. LUKE.

The employment by St. Luke of medical terms in describing some of the diseases which were healed by our Lord and His Apostles, and the fact that his vocabulary is, when closely examined, found to be that of a writer who had received a medical education, and studied medical treatises, requires notice, as it is the plainest possible proof that Luke was a physician, which he is once called in the writings of St. Paul, and which all Christian antiquity unites in representing him to have been.

I alluded shortly to this in the preface to my notes on St. Luke's Gospel, but was unable to do more for want of space. I there referred the reader to a treatise by the Rev. W. K. Hobart, LL.D., of Trinity College, Dublin, which seems to exhaust the subject; and from the numerous instances given in his book I select a few. The evidence is cumulative. A few instances might be accidental, and not prove the point; but the number given by Dr. Hobart is so large that it seems to settle the matter.

Dr. Hobart's book is divided into two parts:—

(I.) The first, in which he notices that St. Luke, in describing diseases and their miraculous cures, employs words and phrases which show that he had a scientific knowledge of such diseases; for the words and phrases which at times at least he uses are such as would suggest themselves to a medical man well versed in the Greek medical writers, such as Hippocrates, Galen, Aretæus, &c.

(II.) When writing on non-medical subjects St. Luke uses many words which Greek physicians were in the habit of employing; for the Greek medical writers, when dealing with non-professional subjects, show a leaning to the use of words to which they were accustomed in their professional language—just as a physician now, in describing some phenomenon not connected with disease, would speak of "symptoms," where others would use the words "signs" or "marks."



## I.

1. In Acts xxviii. 8, "The father of Publius lay sick of a fever (*πυρετοῖς*), and of a bloody flux" (*δυσεντερίᾳ*). We find *πυρετός* in five or six other places in the New Testament, but in the singular number. Here, on the contrary, it is used in the plural; and its use in the plural, where one disease alone is meant, is quite in accordance with well understood medical phraseology. Hobart quotes eight places from Hippocrates, one from Aretæus, and one from Galen, where *πυρετοί* is used. *Δυσεντερία* is, of course, a medical term, but is very rarely used by non-medical writers. (Hobart, xxxv. p. 52.)

2. Acts xiii. 11: "And immediately there fell on him a mist (*ἀχλύς*) and darkness." *ἀχλύς* is peculiar to St. Luke, and is apparently a very rare word, except in the medical writers. Galen, as cited by Scapula, says "that it properly denotes a distemperature of the air, the grossness of which is somewhat between a cloud and a mist, more dense than the latter, but less so than the former, whence in certain disorders of the eye it is called *ἀχλύς*, and those that are afflicted with it (*διὰ τινος ἀχλύος οἴονται βλέπειν*) seem to see through a sort of thick mist or fog." (xxx. p. 44.)

3. Acts ix. 18: "And immediately there fell (*ἀπέπεσον*) from his eyes as it had been scales" (*λεπίδες*). Both these words are peculiar to St. Luke, and are used in conjunction by medical writers. The first two instances given by Dr. Hobart are startling: "*πολλάκις γὰρ ἀποσχίδες ὀσῶν καὶ λεπίδες ἀποπίπτουσιν*" (Galen, Com., ii. 23), and "*ἔσθ' ὅτε μὲν καὶ λεπίδας ἀποπίπτειν*" (Galen, Med. Defin., 295—Hob., xxv. p. 39).

4. Luke iv. 38: "And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever" (*πυρετῷ μεγάλῳ*). Galen states that it was usual with the ancient physicians to distinguish fevers by the terms *μέγας* and *μικρός*. Galen, Different. Febr., i. 1 (vii. 275), "*καὶ σύνθηες ἤδη τοῖς ἰατροῖς ὀνομάζουσιν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ γένει τῆς διαφορᾶς τὸν μέγαν τε καὶ μικρὸν πυρετόν*" (Hob., iii. 3).

5. Acts xxviii. 3-6: "And he shook off the beast (*τὸ θηρίον*) into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen (*πίμπρασθαι*) or fallen down dead (*καταπίπτειν*) suddenly." *πίμπρασθαι* is only found in St. Luke, and is the usual medical word for "to be inflamed." *καταπίπτειν*, also peculiar to

St. Luke, is used by medical writers respecting persons falling down suddenly from wounds, or in epileptic fits.

But the most remarkable circumstance here is the application of the word *θηρίον* to the viper, which is strictly medical; so much so that an antidote, made chiefly from the flesh of vipers, was termed *θηριακή* (Hob., xxxiv. p. 50).

6. Acts iii. 7: "And immediately his feet (*αὐτῶν βάσεις*) and ankle bones (*τὰ σφυρά*) received strength." Though neither *βάσεις* nor *σφυρά* are words confined to medical writers, yet their use in this place betokens investigation by one who knew something of medicine and anatomy. A writer wholly non-professional would have contented himself with saying that the man had the use of his feet given or restored to him, or that he was cured of his lameness, whereas the physician-Evangelist notices the particular parts of his feet—*i.e.*, the lower parts, or bases, and ankle bones were made firm. St. Luke also must have made full inquiries, and learnt that the disease was congenital, and that the man had been thus afflicted forty years (Hob., xxiii. 34).

7. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Lazarus is said to have been lain at the gate full of sores (*ἠλωκωμένος*), and that the dogs came and licked his sores (*τὰ ἔλκη*). (Luke xvi. 19).

*ἠλωκῶσθαι*, peculiar to St. Luke, is the regular medical term for "to be ulcerated." *ἔλκος* is used only twice besides in the New Testament (Rev. xvi. 2, 11). Other words in this parable, *καταψύχειν*, *χάσμα* and *σηριζεῖν* are peculiar to St. Luke, and are all in use in a definite medical sense in Hippocrates, Galen, &c. (xxii. p. 31).

8. Luke viii. 27: "And ware no clothes." St. Luke alone states this respecting the demoniac of Gadara. This was one of the medical notes of Mania. The Archbishop of Dublin (Notes on the Miracles, p. 168) on this passage quotes from Pritchard on Insanity: "A striking and characteristic circumstance is the propensity to go quite naked; the patient tears his clothes to tatters." Aretæus, in his chapter on Mania, states: "*περὶ Μανίης—ἰσθ' ὅτε ἰσθητὰς τε ἐρήξαντο*" (xii. p. 13).

9. Luke x. 34: "Pouring in oil and wine." Dr. Hobart gives five quotations out of Hippocrates, in which wine and oil are thus conjointly applied. Such an application would scarcely be noticed, except by a medical man (xxi. p. 28).

## II.

We now come to cite a few instances of the preference given by St. Luke to terms used in medical writers rather than to the usual terms, as found in the other Evangelists.

1. St. Matthew, in giving the parable, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle," uses the words, *διὰ τρυπήματος ραφίδος*, and St. Mark, *διὰ τῆς τρυμαλιᾶς ραφίδος*; whereas St. Luke expresses the idea by *διὰ τρήματος βελόνης*. Both these words are peculiar to St. Luke; the latter was the term invariably employed by the medical writers for the needle used in surgical operations, and the former was the great medical word for a perforation of the body of any kind (xxxviii. p. 60).

2. Luke xxii. 44 : *θρόμβοι αἵματος*. *θρόμβοι*, "clots," is peculiar to St. Luke, and is rare except in medical writers. Hobart gives instances from Aretæus, Hippocrates, Dioscorides, and Galen (lvi. 79).

3. Acts xxiii. 15 : "As though ye would enquire something more perfectly" (*διαγινώσκειν ἀκριβέστερον*). *διάγνωσις*, Acts xxv. 21. St. Luke alone uses the words *διάγνωσις* and *διαγινώσκειν*, both of which were technical medical terms, the former implying the art of distinguishing disease; the latter to make their diagnosis. *Ἀκριβής* is very much used in conjunction with these words in medical language, as it is in xxiii. 15, above (xciv. p. 256).

4. Acts vi. 1 : "Neglected in the daily ministrations." Daily, *καθημερινός*, peculiar to St. Luke, a rare word except in medical writers, where it is constantly used to denote a class of fevers, also daily doses of medicine, &c. (lxvii. p. 134).

5. Acts xix. 1 : "Having passed through the upper coasts" (*τὰ ἄνωτερικά*). A very rare word except in medical writers, and is in them applied to the upper parts of the body (lxx. p. 148).

6. Luke xvii. 6 : "Ye might say unto this sycamine tree" (*τῇ συκαμίνῳ*); Luke xix. 4, "Climbed up into a sycamore tree" (*ἐπὶ συκομορέαν*). St. Luke distinguishes between the mulberry-tree (*συκάμνος*) and the fig-mulberry (*συκομορέα*). This distinction was not always made. Dioscorides notices this confusion of names. "A physician," Dr. Hobart remarks, "would readily make the distinction, as both are used medicinally, and are frequently described by the medical writers (lxxii. p. 152).

7. Luke xxi. 11 : "and fearful sights" (*φόβητρα*), a very rare word,

peculiar to St. Luke, and used by Hippocrates to express fearful objects which present themselves to the imagination of the sick (lxxiv. p. 161).

8. Luke xxi. 34: "lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting" (*κραίπαλη*), peculiar to St. Luke, and is employed by the medical writers to denote drunken nausea (lxxiv. p. 167).

9. Acts v. 7: "And it was about the space (*διάστημα*) of three hours afterwards." *διάστημα*, peculiar to St. Luke, and apparently a very rare word except in medical writers, where it is used in several senses, as intervals between the giving of medicines, or the paroxysms of a disease (lxxv. p. 171).

10. Acts x. 11: "Knit at the four corners." The phrase, *ἀρχαὶ ὀθόνης* bears clearly on the face of it the mark of a medical hand, for the strange use of *ἀρχαί*, "the beginnings," for "the ends," was the technical expression for the ends of bandages, instead of *πέρας*, employed in ordinary language. Galen remarks on this use (Comm. Off., ii. 8): *καὶ τισὶν ἔδοξεν ἀρχὰς ἐπιδέσμων ἀκούειν ἀντὶ τοῦ πέρας, καίτοι γενικώτερον ὄνομα τὸ πέρας ἐστὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς* (lxxxv. p. 218).

11. Acts xvii. 25: "He giveth to all life and breath (*πνοήν*) and all things." The word *πνοή*, peculiar to St. Luke, is strictly a poetical word, except in medical language, where it was employed in particular to denote the first breath of the child. Hobart gives seven illustrations from Hippocrates (lxxxix. p. 236).

The above are but a few instances culled out of at least ten times as many more, for the examination of which I must refer the reader to Dr. Hobart's book.

## EXCURSUS IIL

### ON THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

Two opinions have been held respecting the gift of tongues:—

1. One that it really was what it seems by its very nature designed to have been, a means of disseminating the Gospel.

2. The other that it never was employed for the preaching of the Gospel, and was not intended to have been so used, but that it was a means for expressing ecstatic devotion, and the speaking with tongues amongst the modern Irvingites is appealed to, as forming a sort of illustration of it.

(1) On the day of Pentecost, when the tongues of fire sat upon each one (either of the 12 or of the 120) to whom God vouchsafed the gift, those "unlearned and ignorant" men who had received the commission to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," seem to have been fully furnished by the power of God for fulfilling their commission: for on that occasion men of every nationality were collected together, and it is said that they exclaimed in astonishment, "Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans, and how hear we every man in our own tongue ( $\tau\eta\ \acute{\iota}\delta\iota\alpha\ \delta\iota\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\omega$ ) wherein we were born? we do hear them speak in our tongues ( $\tau\alpha\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \eta\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \gamma\lambda\omega\sigma\sigma\alpha\iota\varsigma$ ) the wonderful works of God." Here the reader will notice that two names are given to the utterances. However the one ( $\gamma\lambda\omega\sigma\sigma\alpha$ ) may be tampered with so as to be made to signify something above, or more mysterious, or more unintelligible than the usual speech or language of human beings, the other ( $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ) cannot; it must mean language in the ordinary sense of the word, and nothing else.

Nothing, then, can be plainer than that these utterances were not unintelligible sounds, but the words of known human languages, each separate language being known to and recognized by some in the great assembly. The various nationalities in which the various glossai were in use are specified. Now it is exceedingly probable that by far the greater part of these men of various countries who were keeping the feast at Jerusalem, knew some Aramaic or some Greek, or they could scarcely have been sojourners in Jerusalem, but those who spake the tongues were empowered to speak to them in their own tongues, which they at once understood, and saw in it the finger of God.

The next question is, was this a permanent gift, or, which amounts to the same thing, was it the first-fruits or pledge of a gift which might be revived at any moment, when there was a need of it, *i. e.*, when any of the Apostles were led by the Spirit to preach in some country where neither Greek nor Aramaic was intelligible? Most modern expositors (following, as usual, some German) have categorically denied this. For instance, Dean Alford, who fully acknowledges the original miracle, and goes so far as to assert that the will of those who spake had nothing to do with the matter, but that they were passive organs of the Holy Ghost Who alone spake, says: "If the first supposition be made, that the gift of speaking in various languages was bestowed on the disciples for their after use

in preaching the Gospel, we are, I think, running counter to the whole course of Scripture and early patristic evidence on the subject. There is no trace whatever of such a power being possessed or exercised by the Apostles or by those who followed them." No trace! but there is "no trace" whatsoever of the labours of nine out of the twelve Apostles. If we had not had their names recorded in the first chapter, we could not have assumed that St. Luke knew of the existence of three-fourths of the Apostolic college. There is "no trace" whatsoever of the life and labours of St. Peter after the council in the fifteenth chapter. There are years of the life of St. Paul after his conversion of which we have "no trace" of any single incident which might have happened in them. And what is still more to the point, we have "no trace" of any Apostle being compelled to spend months, or may be years, in mastering some language, whereas you cannot take up a missionary journal of the present day without reading of the time which has to be spent before one from this country can very imperfectly make the truth known to those amongst whom he labours.

Now let us suppose one of the Apostles—say St. Andrew—speaking in the tongues of Parthians, or Medes, or Elamites, and Jews of these nations hearing him, and knowing that to that day he had been an ignorant Galilæan, speaking his native Aramaic but imperfectly, they would be beyond measure astonished at the gift, and be ready to welcome the Gospel which was expressed in it. In the course of time this Apostle is directed by the Spirit to preach the Gospel in one of these countries; but when he arrives there he finds that he does not know a word of the language, and has the prospect of spending at least a year there, before he can stammer out the message of salvation. "Oh," he would say to himself, calling to mind the part he had taken on the day of Pentecost, "Oh that God would give me the power of preaching in those languages by which on that blessed day I commended the wonders of his grace to these people." But, no, it must not be, he is left to himself, to his own unaided resources, to spend a year or two in accomplishing the thing which apparently, for little or no reason, he was for a part of a day enabled to do in a moment.

But against these plain assertions, reference is made to the account of the abuse of the gift in 1 Cor. xiv., and certain difficulties, or supposed difficulties, in that chapter are skilfully played off against the plain and clear account of matters in Acts ii., in order

to involve it in the same (supposed) obscurity. Now I most emphatically repudiate any such a way of treating this subject. The Pentecostal account is particularly plain in affirming that the utterances of the *γλῶσσαι* were *διαλεκτοί*, and no obscurity in some expressions respecting the Corinthian phenomena can honestly be used to invalidate this fact. The Corinthian phenomena have been so treated as to suggest doubts as to the wisdom of the Spirit of God in bestowing such a gift. The gift of tongues of the modern Irvingites has been taken to "illustrate" it. The writer of the notes on the Epistle to the Corinthians in Bishop Ellicott's Commentary, in direct contravention of the words of Acts ii. 6, 9, 11, hazards the assertion that "the word *διαλεκτός*, which is repeatedly used to express languages, is never used by St. Paul, or by the author of the Acts in reference to the utterances of those who possessed the gift of tongues; but the other word *γλῶσσα*, which is literally the physical organ of speech,—as if the utterances were simply sounds that proceeded from it." Well, here are the words of St. Luke, *συνῆλθε τὸ πλῆθος καὶ συνεχύθη, ὅτι ἤκουον εἰς ἕκαστος τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν. ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες καὶ θαυμάζον, λέγοντες Οὐκ, ἰδοῦ, πάντες οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ λαλοῦντες Γαλαῖοι; καὶ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀκούομεν ἕκαστος τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν κ.τ.λ.* Then follows the well-known list of the *διαλεκτοί*, concluding with, *ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ.*

What excuse can possibly be made for asserting, in the face of the words of the sacred historian, that the sounds or utterances of the *glossai* were not *διαλεκτοί*? None, except the following, to me utterly unintelligible, remark: "All the various elements of Aramaic or Hellenistic speech, latent in the usual language of the time, were quickened, under the power of this gift, into a new life, sometimes intelligible, sometimes unintelligible, to those who heard it, but always expressive of the vitality and energy of the spirit by which it was animated." Can the reader form any idea of what the writer of this (quoted) sentence means? I confess I cannot.

Again he writes: "The gift was the result of a quickened spiritual power by the action of the Holy Ghost. It poured itself forth in wild, impassioned utterances which were sometimes mistaken for delirium; and these were the expressions not of thoughts, but of feelings, unintelligible always, if uninterpreted to the listener, and sometimes to the utterer himself."

Now the language of feelings, apart from thoughts, is the language—if such it can be called—of animals. So this writer would

have us believe that this gift of the Spirit, which though he places it below prophecy, St. Paul here commends, is that of unreasoning creatures.

If men hold this, what can be their views of the Holy Spirit ?

Now in order to form some coherent judgment respecting the gifts to the Corinthians, I would desire the reader to give some weight to the following considerations.

Amongst the churches to which St. Paul wrote Epistles, the Corinthian Church is the only one in which the gift of tongues is spoken of as existing. No allusion to it is made in the Epistles to the Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians.<sup>1</sup> Now from what we can gather from the contents of these Epistles, the Philippian, Colossian, and Thessalonian Christians were in a much higher spiritual state, taking spirituality to mean conformity to the mind and will of the Spirit, than the Corinthian, and so, we should suppose, would be furnished with gifts for expressing the highest state of devotional feeling. But it is not so: no mention whatsoever is made of the gift of tongues as bestowed on any member of these Churches.

Why, then, did God vouchsafe this gift to the Corinthian Church ? Simply because of all places in Greece Corinth was the one most suited for its exercise; for, on account of its position, having two ports opening to two seas, and its commercial importance, it was thronged with persons of the most varied nationalities. I suppose that, in this respect, it was exceeded only by Rome, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Ephesus. It was given to certain members of the Corinthian Churches solely for purposes of instruction, that they might speak to the crowds of foreigners which thronged its streets and places of public resort "in their own tongues the wonderful works of God."

Now with this agrees the fact that all the four places in which this gift was bestowed were the resort of men of all nations, *by whom the reality of the gift could be at once tested*. The four places are Jerusalem, Cæsarea (pronounced to be far more a Gentile than a Jewish city, having cohorts of legions from all parts of the empire in garrison there), Ephesus, the resort of pilgrims and traders from all the Asiatic provinces, and Corinth.

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<sup>1</sup> I have not mentioned the Epistle to the Ephesians, because it is probably a circular Epistle.



If a Christian received the gift in such places as Philippi or Thessalonica, it would, humanly speaking, be thrown away. The miracle could be of use to no one, for the speaker would speak a language which no one in the place could understand; whereas if a Christian of Corinth or Ephesus received this gift he would find persons in every street on whose behalf he could exercise it.

But it may be urged that we are not categorically informed that the "tongue" was used for purposes of instruction. But, I ask, what can the Apostle mean when he says, "Tongues are a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" (1 Cor. xiv. 22)? Tongues, or spoken language, can only be a sign to those who understand such language. If an unbeliever, a foreigner, heard another speak to him with great apparent earnestness in a language not intelligible unto him, he would put it down to madness (v. 23). But if the same foreigner was assured that the speaker knew but a short time before not one word of his (the foreigner's) native language, and yet heard himself addressed fluently by him in that language, it would be to the hearer as it was to multitudes on the day of Pentecost, the most overwhelming sign of the truth of the message. He would say "here is indeed the finger of God." No being can have power to pour into a man's mind the knowledge of a multitude of words, and to enable him to inflect them and to pronounce them aright, except He Who has all power over the substance of mind as well as of matter.

But again, why did St. Paul write (v. 18), "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all"? Evidently, because he preached the Gospel to more tribes of men than they all. If, as we are told, the gift of tongues was given for the expression of "ecstatic devotion" that it poured itself forth in wild, impassioned utterances, why should the Apostle require a multiplicity of tongues to express it? The thing seems absurd upon the face of it.

The reader will see in a moment that these two places can only be understood by the glossai finding their only possible expression in known *dialektoi*.

Every expression in this chapter agrees with the old common-sense explanation that St. Paul, throughout it, alludes to the abuse of a gift, which abuse consisted in this, that instead of using the tongues as "a sign to them that believe not," which was their legitimate use, they uttered them in the Church, where none needed them, and none understood them. Every word in the

chapter implies that what was uttered had a meaning which could be interpreted, and which was intended to be understood, if spoken to the persons for whose sake it was given, and "not a wild impassioned utterance," the "expressions not of thoughts, but of feelings."

A few words in conclusion.

It has been asserted that there is no patristic evidence that the "gift of tongues was used for the dissemination of the Gospel." But this is not the fact. We have the evidence of two patristic writers of the highest eminence. One Irenæus, who lived within one hundred years after the writing of the Acts, who says, "Luke relates that the Spirit descended on the disciples after the Ascension of the Lord, on the day of Pentecost, in order that all nations might be enabled to enter into life; wherefore they united in all languages in praising God the Holy Spirit, bringing distant tribes into unity, and offering the firstfruits of all nations to God." (Quoted in Eusebius, v. ch. 7; also Irenæus, v. 6, in which latter place the tongues seem to have existed in his day.)

And another, Origen, who lived fifty or sixty years later than this, who says: "I suppose that he was made a debtor to different nations, because, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, he had received the gift of speaking in the languages of all nations, as he himself also saith, 'I speak in tongues more than ye all.'" Quoted in Wordsworth.

Each of these fathers lived, the one within one hundred, the other within two hundred, years after the publication of the Acts, and seventeen hundred years nearer to the times of the New Testament than those who assert that the gift of tongues was never given and never used for missionary purposes. The Fathers of a century or so later contain many references to the employment of this gift in the dissemination of the Gospel.

2. The gift of tongues claimed by modern Irvingites has been said to be illustrative of the gift of tongues of the Apostolic age. How they can be said to "illustrate" any gifts of the Spirit of God the reader will be able to judge from the following extracts from a short treatise on Irvingism in Mr. Bennett's series, entitled "The Church's Broken Unity," page 191. There is a section, pp. 189-204, devoted to the exposure of these pretensions; I make the following extracts:—

"Now, first, out of the eight persons who were averred so to

have spoken, one, Mr. Baxter, admitted that he was deceived. Another admitted that it was no gift at all, but that she was gradually led on to imposture. Miss Hall was governess in the family of Mr. Perceval, who became one of the supposed Apostles. At first she conceived herself to be inspired; she was one of the 'gifted persons;' 'for months she was received as a prophetess among them;' 'she was the first to speak in the public congregation.' On an unimportant matter she differed from two other ladies, who also spoke (as they supposed) in the tongue, and who thereupon declared her a false prophetess. She abandoned the Irvingite body.

"A third, Mary Campbell, one of the original claimants of the gift, not only uttered such sounds, but wrote down what she intended to be a written character representing them. These fragments of writing were submitted, doubtless, to many. The writer of this article was asked about them, as were the late Dr. Lee (the Hebrew Professor at Cambridge) and Sir G. Staunton. These characters were plainly not any known characters, but had most likeness to those which one sees on the large Chinese tea-chests, some memory of which was probably floating in Mary Campbell's mind. Mary Campbell did not profess to understand the characters which she traced. They were no real characters, so that no one else could understand them. To write such characters was a mere unmeaning act under the guise of a real meaning.

"Again, a Mr. Pilkington, who was for some time among them 'set down various sounds which he declares he heard.' Of one he says that 'it burst forth with an astonishing and terrible crash.' He says, 'that it gives some idea of the sound with which the tongue was delivered by him (Mr. Taplin), if *cras-cran-cra-crash* were uttered with a sudden and rapid vociferation. The effect he describes to be such that one to whom it was spoken, and who was herself supposed to speak in the tongue, started three inches from her seat.

[I once knew a Scotch Baronet, a man particularly staid and collected in his whole demeanour, who was, in his early years, a frequenter of the meeting-house where these things took place. He was, however, somewhat reticent in his communications respecting them, and from one of his friends I heard the reason. One morning, at a meeting in the vestry, he heard, for the first time, the exercise of the gift, and the sound was so unearthly and

appalling, that he ran home as fast as his legs could carry him, and never looked back, as he said, till he reached his own door, at some distance.]

“ Mr. Pilkington noted down other sounds which he heard, being the whole, or part of what was supposed to be spoken in an unknown tongue. Such were ‘gthis dil Emma sumo,’ ‘hozeghin alta stare,’ ‘holimoth holif aw thaw,’ ‘hoze homena nostra,’ three times repeated ‘cosa sera haitho caro, yeo cogo nomo.’ Mr. Pilkington explains some of these words as broken English, ‘holimoth holif awthaw’ being Holy, most holy Father (the last divided differently and pronounced broadly). The speaker did not deny that she had spoken English, but whispered to her neighbour, ‘I didn’t speak in English, did I?’ ”

I have a distinct recollection that within the last few years, in looking up this history for quite another purpose, I came across several sentences taken down at the time, which were certainly not uttered by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or, I should think, any other spirit, but were distinct, though somewhat incorrect, reminiscences of the Eton Latin Grammar.

And such things, we are told, “illustrate” the Pentecostal action of the Spirit of God.

#### EXCURSUS IV.

##### PLINY'S LETTER TO TRAJAN AND THE EMPEROR'S REPLY.

Having, once or twice, mentioned Pliny's letter to Trajan respecting the persecution of the Christians, I think it may be well to give it in full, as from it we learn the opinion of an educated, and we may add, tolerant heathen as to the effect of the spread of Christianity on society, especially in its religious aspect.

Trajan's persecution had commenced A.D. 100, but before putting into execution the extreme rigour of the law, Pliny addressed a letter to the Emperor (Plin. Epist. x. 97, or 96), which, with the imperial rescript, has fortunately come down to us and as it goes back twenty years, it embraces a period of at least thirteen years prior to the death of St. John :—

“Pliny, to the Emperor Trajan, wisheth health and happiness. It is my constant custom, sir, to refer myself to you in all matters concerning which I have any doubt; for who can better direct me where I hesitate, or instruct me where I am ignorant? I have never been present at any trials of Christians, so that I know not well what is the subject matter of punishment, or of enquiry, or what strictness ought to be used in either. Nor have I been a little perplexed to determine whether any difference ought to be made on account of age, or whether the young and tender, and the full grown and robust, ought to be treated all alike; whether repentance should entitle to pardon, or whether all who have once been Christians ought to be punished, though they are now no longer so; whether the name itself, although no crime be detected, or crimes only belonging to the name, ought to be punished. Concerning all these things I am in doubt.

“In the meantime I have taken this course with all who have been brought before me, and have been accused as Christians. I have questioned them whether they were Christians. Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated my question a second time, and a third time, threatening also to punish them with death. Such as still persisted I ordered away to be punished; for it was no matter of doubt with me, whatever might be the nature of their opinion that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. There were others of the same infatuation, whom, because they are Roman citizens, I have noted down to be sent to the city.

“In a short time, the crime spreading itself, even while under persecution, as is usual in such cases, divers sorts of people came in my way. An information was presented to me, without mentioning the author, containing the names of many persons, who upon examination, denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so; who repeated after me an invocation of the gods, and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image, which, for that purpose, I had caused to be brought and set before them, together with the statues of the deities. Moreover, they reviled the name of Christ, none of which things, as is said, they who are real Christians can by any means be compelled to do. These, therefore, I thought proper to discharge. Others were named by an informer who at first confessed themselves Christians, and afterwards denied it; the rest said they had been Christians, but had left them

—some three years ago, some longer, and one or more, above twenty years. They all worshipped your image, and the statues of the gods; these also reviled Christ. They affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day, before it was light, and sing among themselves, alternately, a hymn to Christ as God, and to bind themselves by a *Sacramentum*, not to the commission of any wickedness but—not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a meal, which they ate in common without any disorder, but this they had forborne since the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I prohibited assemblies.

“Upon receiving this account, I judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two maid servants, which were called ministers (*Rom. xvi. 1*). But I have discovered nothing besides an evil and excessive superstition. Suspending, therefore, all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared unto me a matter highly deserving consideration, especially upon account of the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering; for many of all ages, and every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the smaller towns also, and the open country. Nevertheless, it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin to be more frequented, and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims, likewise, are everywhere bought up, whereas for some time there were few purchasers. Whence it is easy to imagine what numbers of people might be reclaimed if pardon were granted to those who shall repent.”

To the above letter Pliny received the annexed reply:—

“Trajan to Pliny wisheth health and happiness.

“You have taken the right method, my Pliny, in your proceedings with those who have been brought before you as Christians: for it is impossible to establish any one rule that shall hold universally. They are not to be sought for. If any are brought before you, and are convicted, they ought to be punished. However, he that denies his being a Christian, and makes it evident in fact; that is, by

supplicating to our gods (though he be suspected to have been so formerly) may be pardoned upon repentance; but in no case, of any crime whatever, may a bill of information be received, without being signed by him who presents it, for that would be a dangerous precedent, and unworthy of my government."