

## NOTES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(XV.—XIX.)

xv. 6. λόγος is here again translated *matter* in our versions, as in viii. 21; a sense which it never bears. There is no reason to depart from the literal rendering *Word*: for the question which brought the council together at Jerusalem was the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles; which is here designated as *this Word*. They met to consider what terms should be offered to Gentile converts as the condition of their admission to the privilege of Christian baptism.

xv. 7. The words ἐν ὑμῖν must not be attached to ἐξελέξατο, as in our versions, “*made choice among you*”—otherwise the order would have been ἐξελέξατο ἐν ὑμῖν—but to ἀφ’ ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων. Without this addition the word ἀρχαίων would point to Old Testament days, as it does in v. 21, rather than to early Christian days. The preposition ἀπό marks the time at which an event happened, where the speaker desires to indicate how long ago it was; and should therefore be rendered, not *from*, but *in early days among you*.

xv. 9. Our versions ignore the difference between πίστευ and τῇ πίστει. It is not suggested that the hearts of the Gentiles had been cleansed by the mere presence of *faith* as an inward disposition of mind, but by *the faith*; i.e. by their believing in Christ and embracing Christianity. The distinction is of importance in many passages of the New Testament, and is specially marked in Rom. iii. 30; where Israelite faith in the true God apart from the Christian faith is declared to be a justifying and saving faith, “God will justify the circumcision by faith (ἐκ πίστεως)”: but of the Gentiles it is said that He would justify them through the instrumentality of the faith in Christ (διὰ τῆς πίστεως).

The Apostles did not ascribe a cleansing and justifying virtue to a mere sentiment of faith apart from its object and from the knowledge of the true God.

xv. 10. The language of our versions, "*Why tempt ye God?*" does not convey the force of the rebuke so clearly as the Greek *πειράζετε*. They were *making trial of God*, how far His patience would endure with them, by imposing upon the Gentiles a yoke which had proved too heavy for Israel, and which God had pronounced needless for the disciples by His grant of His Holy Spirit to the uncircumcised.

xv. 11. Salvation is spoken of in the Greek text as immediate rather than future; moreover the Greek order of words lays stress on the doctrine that Israelites depend for salvation on the grace of the Lord Jesus, like the Gentile converts: *we trust to be saved, in the same manner as they do, through the grace of the Lord Jesus*.

xv. 15. *συμφωνεῖν* describes a harmony between the utterance of two voices; its object therefore must be either the speaker himself or his language, not the fact recorded by him. Hence *τούτῳ συμφωνοῦσι* does not mean *to this agree*, but *with him*, sc. Symeon, *agree*.

xv. 16. The original passage in Amos (ix. 11) makes no mention of *returning*; and James had no motive for altering the prophet's words in order to introduce it. It is evident by comparison of the language in the two places that *ἀναστρέψω* is here substituted for *ἀναστήσω*, and *κατεστραμμένα* for *κατεσκαμμένα*, as synonymous expressions; and that these two verbs *ἀναστρέφειν* and *καταστρέφειν* are here used by way of antithesis to each other in the sense of *uprear* and *throw down*. It is true that *ἀναστρέφειν* is commonly used of overturning that which stands; but when used with reference to ruined buildings, it makes a natural antithesis to *κατεστραμμένα*.

xv. 17. By *τῶν ἀνθρώπων* are meant *the men* of Israel; in accordance with other prophecies, a remnant only of

them were to be saved after the mass had perished in their unbelief : and this residue was to form the true Israel and worship in the restored temple.

xv. 18. The MSS. leave us no choice but to adopt the same corrected text as the Revised Version, and end the sentence with *γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος*. Now these words are not quoted from Amos; they are an addition made by James in order to impress upon his hearers the lesson taught by the prophet Amos, for the sake of which he had made the quotation. The lesson was that in the Restoration the Gentiles were to seek the Lord, and that upon them the name of God had been named, as in reality the people of God. This language of God in Amos showed, says James, that these Gentiles were *known* of him *from the beginning of time*; seeing that the prophets of old proclaimed it in His name and by His Spirit. A kindred idea is conveyed in kindred language in iii. 21, "*God spake of the times of restoration by the mouth τῶν ἁγίων ἀπ' αἰῶνος προφητῶν.*" The additions τῷ θεῷ or τῷ κυρίῳ, found in some MSS., seem to have been made for the better explanation of the meaning of the clause.

xv. 19. The preposition παρά in παρενοχλεῖν conveys an advice *not to trouble* the Gentile converts any *further* than was absolutely necessary for the peaceful association of the two classes of converts. It corresponds to the decision subsequently expressed in the letter to lay upon the Gentiles no greater burden than certain necessary things.

xv. 20. The Greek word ἀλισγημάτων describes a particular kind of *pollutions*, viz. that of unclean food (Dan. i. 8; Mal. i. 7; Eccus. xl. 29); by *pollutions of idols* are meant those contracted by eating food offered to idols, as is more distinctly expressed in v. 29, and not those of idolatrous worship in general.

xv. 22, 25, 28. ἔδοξε is repeated three times, once in the history and twice in the letter: it is the official term

used in Greek for announcing the decision of a popular assembly. The decrees of the Athenian people for instance were drawn up in the form ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ. It is therefore employed here in like manner to record the decision of the Church, *it pleased the apostles* . . . ; and the substantive δόγματα is afterwards used in speaking of these decisions. This language corresponds to the idea of established government in the Church, which is conveyed by the passage as a whole. V. 28 claims for the voice of the assembled Church the authority of the Spirit ; *it hath pleased the Holy Spirit and us*.

xv. 24. ἀνασκευάζοντες, which denotes literally unfurnishing and breaking up a home, is here transferred by a natural figure to the *unsettlement* of the soul by false teaching : it is an exaggeration to render it *subverting*.

xv. 26. Paul and Barnabas are here designated as men who have surrendered their lives absolutely to the service of Christ. The word παραδεδωκόσι does not refer to any *hazards* which they may have encountered in consequence, but to the complete self-sacrifice of their lives.

xv. 27. It is said of Judas and Silas that they *are themselves also reporting the same by word of mouth*, not that *they shall tell*. The present tense is used because they were commissioned to make a verbal report at the same time that they delivered the letter ; for the tenses in Greek letters were constantly adapted to the time at which they were to be read, instead of the time at which they were written.

xv. 30, 33. ἀπολυθέντες and ἀπελύθησαν signify that Judas and Silas were *dispatched* with a formal commission from the Church of Jerusalem to Antioch, and with a formal reply from the Church of Antioch to the letter of which they had been bearers.

xv. 39. παροξυσμός denotes any kind of excitement, good or bad. In the only other passage of the New Testament

in which it occurs, it denotes an excitement to love and good works (Heb. x. 24). But there can be no question that it is used here of *irritation*, as *παροξύνειν* is in 1 Cor. xiii. 5 of provocation to angry temper. Paul and Barnabas took different views, probably as to the whole question of the gospel of the Gentiles, and certainly as to the choice of Mark for their minister, and there was sufficient heat of feeling to induce them to carry on their work apart in future. But there is no suggestion of sharp language or of open quarrel, as is implied in the language of our versions, "*a sharp contention.*"

xvi. 13. *παρὰ ποταμόν* is added to *τῆς πύλης* by way of specifying *the riverside gate* as that at which they went out: for there were no doubt several gates to Philippi. There being no synagogue, nor regular Jewish worship in Philippi, some devout people were in the habit of meeting on the Sabbath in an open space outside this gate for prayer. *ἐνομιζομεν*, *supposed*, does not imply any doubt as to the *place*, which could be easily ascertained, but as to the meeting on that particular Sabbath. *τὴν προσευχὴν* in v. 16 seems to signify the regular meeting for prayer rather than the place of prayer.

xvi. 16. Our versions translate *ἐργασίαν γαῖν*, here and at v. 19. The passages of ancient authors adduced in lexicons to support this translation point rather to *employment*; which was only so far connected with *gain*, as often to denote a trade carried on for payment. *παρέχειν ἐργασίαν* means in both places *to provide employment*. The managers, who had control over this afflicted girl, carried on the trade of divination, and made use of her cries, as the managers of the Delphic oracle did of the Pythia's delirious cries, themselves framing out of them answers to those who consulted them: she thus brought them much business in their trade.

xvi. 18, 19. The threefold repetition of *ἐξελεῖν* is evidently intentional; and our versions cannot be right in

rendering it, *come out* in v. 18, and *was gone* in v. 19. The *departure* of the evil spirit is directly associated with the *departure* of the diviners' hope of gain. Hence it becomes obvious that the command to the evil spirit was not to *come out of her*, but to *depart from her*. And this is the literal translation of the Greek ἐξελεθεῖν ἀπ' αὐτῆς. The use of the same phrase by Peter in his conscience-stricken appeal to his master, "Depart from me, O Lord," illustrates its application to demoniacs in the language of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The more obvious expression ἐξελεθεῖν ἐξ is also used in the Gospel of St. Mark, but in a different sense: the command, "hold thy peace and come out of him," did not involve more than an arrest of a violent paroxysm, and is not presented as a cure. The words used to effect a cure were not merely "come out of him," but also "enter no more into him" (Mark ix. 25). For the affliction of these demoniacs did not consist in a continuous possession, but in occasional seizures; it was therefore necessary for their permanent relief that the spirit should not only come out, but also depart from them: and this was expressed in the words ἐξελεθεῖν ἀπό. Similarly in xix. 12 the term ἐκπορεύεσθαι, signifies not *going out*, but *departure*.

xvi. 25. The literal rendering of κατὰ τὸ μεσονύκτιον, *in the midnight watch*, has a decided advantage over the vague expression *about midnight* in our versions, as it marks the time in the only way that prisoners in the dark could possibly know it, by the watches which the prison guards observed in making their nightly rounds.

xvii. 3. Our versions speak of Paul *alleging* that it behoved the Christ to suffer and to rise again, as though he had adduced arguments of his own; but παρατιθέμενος signifies that as he opened to them the Scriptures he set before them passages proving that these sufferings and resurrection were preordained. The verb is applied elsewhere sometimes to setting food or instruction before

another, sometimes (in middle voice) to the commending oneself and one's interest to the care of another, whether God or man.

xvii. 4. Our versions render *προσεκληρώθησαν* *consorted with*, as though it implied no more than outward companionship. But whether *προσεκληροῦσθαι* be middle voice, as I believe, signifying that they *threw in their lot* with Paul and Silas; or passive, signifying that they were associated with them in their lot by God, it implies their complete acceptance of Christianity. The idea of Israel being God's portion (*κληρος θεοῦ*) is common in the LXX., and is transferred in Eph. i. 11 to Christians, who are said to have a portion in Christ assigned them by God (*ἐκληρώθημεν*); so also in Acts xxvi. 18 (*λαβεῖν κληρον*). But the context points here to some action of the Philippians themselves rather than to a Divine appointment.

xvii. 10. Our versions refer the last clause to Paul and Silas; but the indefinite *οἷτινες*, and the verb *ἀπήεσαν* show that the history is referring to the party from Thessalonica, who after they had reached the synagogue of Berea and presented Paul and Silas to them *went away* to their home. By *the synagogue* is meant not the building, but the Jewish congregation of the place, as in vi. 9 and xiii. 43. The escort, being a deputation not otherwise known, are naturally designated by *οἷτινες*, which could not be used of Paul and Silas.

xvii. 12. The Revised Version amplifies the expression, *honourable women* into *women of honourable estate*. But Christian usage follows the best Greek authors in applying *εὐσχήμεων* to respectability of life and character, rather than position or estate. In 1 Cor. vii. 35, xii. 23, *εὐσχήμεων* and *ἀσχήμων* refer to questions of modesty and decorum.

xvii. 14. There are two readings here, *ὡς (ἕως) ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν*. The first is adopted by the Authorized Version; it expresses in excellent Greek the fact that the Bereans

sent away Paul to go, as it was pretended, to the sea. The second is adopted by the Revised Version, *as far as to the sea*, on the authority of some of the best MSS. But it is very doubtful whether *ἕως ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν* can be used in Greek, instead of *ἕως τῆς θαλάσσης*, to define the limit of an actual journey in contrast with its final destination. And it is very probable that *ἕως* found its way into the text from *ἕως Ἀθηνῶν* below, as the correction of a transcriber who could not understand *ὡς*. For the language of *v. 15*, *ἤγαγον ἕως Ἀθηνῶν*, makes it plain that the party did in fact proceed by land to Athens instead of following the ordinary route by sea. Naturally however they started from Berea *as it were to the sea*, in order to baffle their pursuers.

xvii. 20. The word *strange* in our versions does not adequately express the amazement with which these Athenian philosophers listened to Paul's teaching. *ξενίζοντα* means literally *amazing*, or bewildering. The same verb *ξενίεσθαι* is rendered again, *think it strange* in 1 Pet. iv. 4, 12, but it is really *to be amazed*.

xvii. 18. By *ξένων δαιμονίων καταγγελεύς*, *proclaimer of foreign divinities*, the adversaries of Paul impute to him the introduction of some new worship from the East; they compare the worship of the risen Jesus with the various cults of deified men such as Bacchus, Hercules, or Osiris, which had established themselves in the Greek and Roman world.

xvii. 21. *ἡὐκαίρουν* does not mean *spent their time*, but *had leisure*, as in Mark vi. 31; 1 Cor. xvi. 12. The word intimates with a touch of scorn that a busy curiosity was the prevalent feature of an Athenian holiday, *ἡμέρα εὐκαιρος* being a public holiday (Mark vi. 21).

xvii. 22. Our versions translate *δεισιδαιμονεστέρους*, *superstitious*; but this is quite out of harmony with the tone of the speaker, who is anxious to find ground of sympathy with his hearers, and selects the altar to an



unknown God as evidence of a religious instinct, groping in the dark after a God, whom they knew not as yet, and whose true nature he proceeds to unfold for their better understanding.

xvii. 23. Our versions translate *εὔσεβειτε* *worship*; but it really means *show piety*, and is used accordingly of piety towards a man's own family in 1 Tim. v. 4. Greek poets spoke of piety towards the gods, but we can hardly conceive a Christian Apostle finding the word consistent with reverence for the true God, and using the term *δὲ εὔσεβειτε* in relation to Him. But when *δὲ* is changed into *ὁ ἀγνοοῦντες εὔσεβειτε*, it is still more strange to find the Revised Version connecting *ὁ* with *εὔσεβειτε*, and making the object of worship a thing, "*what ye worship*": for even false worship, except the most degraded, was addressed to persons, not to things. Obviously *ὁ* is governed by *ἀγνοοῦντες*, and the meaning is *what ye are ignorant of in your piety, this I announce to you*. The subsequent context shows what this was which Paul had to announce to them, *viz.* the Divine nature (*τὸ θεῖον*), on which, and on man's ignorance of it, he proceeds to dwell.

xvii. 25. *θεραπεύεται* describes the personal attendance rendered by ministers of heathen temples to the statues of their gods: such as dressing and washing, conveyance on litters in public processions, and establishment on couches as guests at public dinners.

xvii. 26. When the text is corrected by the omission of *αἵματος*, as in the Revised Version, *ἐξ ἑνός* must be taken to mean *of one father*, as it does in Heb. ii. 11. In English the word *father* must be added to express the force of the proposition *ἐξ*, *out of one*, which is sufficient alone in Greek.

xviii. 5. *λόγῳ*, not *πνεύματι*, is undoubtedly the true text; but there is much obscurity in the Revised Version, "*Paul was constrained by the word.*" *συνέχεσθαι* signifies a bond-

age, either literal like that of sickness or imprisonment, or moral such as bondage to an engrossing interest of the mind or occupation of the time. *συνείχετο τῷ λόγῳ* describes Paul as wholly absorbed in the preaching of the Word. This entire occupation in the gospel ensued on the arrival of Silas and Timothy, and is contrasted with his previous habit of devoting his week-days mainly to the work of tentmaking, and employing the Sabbath only in the work of the gospel. But no explanation is given here of this change of habits; we have to seek it in his Epistles, and it affords an interesting example of undesigned coincidence between the life and letters. In xvii. 14-16 we learn with surprise that Silas and Timothy awaited a summons before starting to rejoin Paul at Athens; but it is still more surprising that after the urgent summons sent immediately on his arrival there, he waited in vain, first at Athens, and then for some weeks at Corinth. This is explained by 1 Thess. iii. 1-6: he had himself given them a commission to visit afresh the Macedonian Churches which he had been compelled to leave with such haste. This commission must have been given before he left Berea, for it occasioned his being left alone on his arrival at Athens; and it was apparently the reason why they tarried behind at Berea. The only Church directly mentioned as visited by them on this occasion is Thessalonica. But it may be inferred that they visited Philippi also; and the reference in Phil. ii. 22 to Timothy's special services to the gospel there confirms the inference. Again, the Philippians sent Paul money after, as well as before, his departure from Macedonia, for his personal needs (Phil. iv. 15); and he states that he had spent the money brought to him by the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, in ministering to the Church of Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 8, 9). It appears then that Silas and Timothy were the bearers of this contribution from Philippi, and that he was thus

relieved from the necessity of labouring with his own hands for daily bread, and enabled to devote himself exclusively to the gospel.

xviii. 12. Our versions say “*rose up against Paul*” and “*made insurrection against*”: but *κατά* cannot mean *against*, or it would be followed by a genitive case; and *ἐπέστησαν* does not imply a popular rising, but that they beset Paul, perhaps laying hands upon him for his arrest: *κατά* signifies that their ill will came to a head in this definite and decided onset upon him.

xviii. 27. Though Christians are often described as *the disciples* in the Acts, the Christians of Ephesus would hardly be described as the brethren and those of Corinth as the disciples, had it not been intended to intimate a relation of teacher and disciple as subsisting between them. And this corresponds to what we learn of Priscilla and Aquila that they had been the earliest companions of St. Paul at Corinth, and were now at Ephesus, where they had been specially instrumental in the conversion of Apollos. They were doubtless forward in writing to *their disciples* at Corinth on his behalf. The middle voice *προτροπεψάμενοι* indicates that the writers were specially interested in the Church of Corinth, if not actually members of it.

Our versions join *διὰ τῆς χάριτος* to *πεπιστευκόσιν*, and speak of those that *had believed through grace*: but this ignores the article, and makes it an unmeaning addition; for how could any believe, except through grace? The words ought to be joined to *συνεβάλετο*: he contributed much to the support of the Church in Corinth by *the grace given him*; for being mighty in the Scriptures, he employed his power on behalf of Christ.

xix. 1. The word *upper* scarcely conveys the force of *ἀνωτερικά* as distinguishing the *inland* region of Galatia and Phrygia which Paul had been visiting (xviii. 23), from the position of Ephesus on the coast.

xix. 2. The correct rendering of the tenses in the Revised Version shows that the question put to these converts about receiving the Holy Ghost, and their answer, refer to the time of their conversion. But the word "*given*" is neither expressed nor implied in Greek.

xix. 4. Our versions translate "*saying unto the people, that they should believe*": *should believe* here means *ought to believe*; but it is impossible to give this meaning to ἵνα πιστεύσωσι, which really depends on ἐβάπτισεν, while τ. λαῶ λέγων is a parenthesis belonging entirely to τὸν ἐρχόμενον, from which it ought not to be detached. John spoke much to the people of Him that was coming after, and of repentance as a preparation, but not of faith. The connexion is as follows: *John baptized with the baptism of repentance, that they might believe on Him that was coming after him, as he said to the people, that is, on Jesus.*

xix. 9. ἀποστάς denotes, not *departure*, but a complete withdrawal from communion, social or religious: he made the school of Tyrannus his daily resort instead of the Jewish synagogue.

xix. 15. The language of our versions, "*Paul I know,*" implies personal knowledge; but ἐπίσταμαι signifies a mental process by which we arrive at the understanding of facts or language. Therefore τ. Παῦλον ἐπίστ. does not assert a knowledge of the Apostle, but an understanding of their language, and of their reason for using the name of Paul as they had done. And this accounts for the insertion of the article: "*this Paul, that you speak of, I understand.*"

xix. 18. Our versions use language which implies that many of the Christian converts had practised magic arts in secret, and were now for the first time terrified into confession by the fate of the exorcists. The Greek text does not warrant this strange and unworthy picture of the Ephesian Church. For the word ἀναγγέλλοντες signifies

either report of a fact, or announcement of a doctrine, not the confession of a secret sin; and ἐξομολογείσθαι, when used absolutely without τ. ἁμαρτίας, signifies confession of faith or outspoken thanks to God. The statement therefore is not that they *came confessing and declaring their own deeds*, but that they went giving praise and reporting how these exorcists had fared. The effect of their report on those that practised magic arts is given in the next verse; but there is nothing to identify them with the Ephesian Christians.

xix. 20. Our versions say, "*So mightily grew the word of the Lord.*" But the order of the Greek text, κατὰ κράτος τ. κυρίου ὁ λόγος, compels us to join τ. κυρίου with κατὰ κράτος. And this gives a more distinct meaning to the verse by its pointed reference to the might of Jesus as exemplified in the affair of the exorcists. The connexion is as follows: "*Thus by might of the Lord grew the word.*"

xix. 24. Our versions say *Demetrius brought no small gain* (R. V. *no little business*). But παρείχετο ἐργασίαν means that Demetrius, who was himself a master silversmith, gave a good deal of employment to the silversmiths in the manufacture of silver shrines. The meaning is the same as παρέιχεν ἐργασίαν in xvi. 16; but as Demetrius was himself engaged in the trade and shared the profits, the middle voice is here used. τοὺς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐργάτας are not exactly *workmen of like occupation*, but the workmen *who have to do with that sort of work*, i.e. the subordinate trades of metalwork and carpentering connected with the business, whose welfare (εὐπορία) depended on it.

xix. 29. More is implied in συναρπάσαντες than is expressed in our versions, which state that they *caught or seized* Gaius and Aristarchus. They hurried them off violently with them to the theatre, as Stephen had been hurried off to trial (Acts vi. 12); the same term is applied

to the tempestuous wind which drove Paul's ship out to sea off the coast of Crete (xxvii. 15).

xix. 33. The margin of the Revised Version gives the only possible rendering for *συνεβίβασαν*, when it refers to a single person, as it does here. It is frequently used in the LXX in the same sense of *instructing*. It appears that some of the multitude who belonged to the Jewish faction instructed Alexander, the Jews putting him forward as their representative, to exculpate them from the charge of disparaging their goddess.

xix. 40. Our versions say "*there being no cause,*" as if the Greek were *μηδεμιᾶς αἰτίας*. *μηδενός* must be masculine, referring to a person. The clause "*there being no one to blame,*" repeats the argument used already in v. 37, that there had been no one guilty of temple robbery or of blasphemy, whose conduct might be pleaded to the Roman governor of the province as an excuse for the popular excitement; therefore the city was in danger to be accused of riot for the day's assembly, which was altogether illegal.

F. RENDALL.

---