

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

*MISSIONARY METHODS IN THE TIMES OF THE
APOSTLES.*

I WOULD point out, as St. Paul's second rule in missionary work, that he always sought out the great centres of the world's intercourse, and exerted his whole strength in forming communities in these places, which, comparatively speaking, were few, but which in a short time were ready, not only to assert themselves, but also to spread the Christian faith in their neighbourhood. This rule touches the first in many points, inasmuch as the Jewish migration had also chiefly sought out these places. In the large and busy towns such as Antioch and Ephesus, Thessalonica and Corinth, and, still more, in Alexandria and Rome, the Jews formed a very considerable portion of the population. But apart from this St. Paul chose the large towns before all others as missionary stations. When, on his second missionary journey, he crossed the interior of Asia Minor, it seems to have been his intention to press on to the large towns on the west coast, to Ephesus and Smyrna, but the "Spirit forbid him." He then intended to take the road to Bithynia, and he seems to have had Nicomedia, and, further on, Byzantium, which were already important towns, in his mind, towns which were afterwards chosen by Diocletian and Constantine as the seats of their governments. Again the "Spirit suffered him not." When he arrived on the shores of Europe he did not go for a lengthy stay to Neapolis but to Philippi, the chief town of that part of Macedonia; neither to Apollonia, nor to Amphipolis, but to the larger commercial town of Thessalonica. He worked for a year and a half in Corinth, the chief political capital and the most important commercial town in the Greek province. He does not seem to have left Corinth during that period. St. Luke says he remained there

eighteen months. And yet we find that Christian communities existed in the next generation at Cenchrea, and in other places in the province.¹

He followed the same plan, and with the same success, at Ephesus, to which he now turned his steps. He devoted a period of three years to founding the Ephesian Church, if we count from the day he landed at Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla.² During this period a number of communities were formed in the province of Asia,³ though they had not been visited by St. Paul. We learn this, not only from the account in the Acts of the Apostles, but also from the Epistle sent, some years later, by the Apostle from Rome to these districts. The communities in Colossæ, Hierapolis, and Laodicea, and the larger circle of Asiatic communities to which the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians was addressed, had not generally become acquainted with St. Paul, although individual Christians living there had previously met him. St. Paul was also content to found a local community here in a place of commanding position and to watch over it during its early development; but, in this way, a kind of provincial Church arose very quickly.

Even before his departure from Ephesus he had been looking out far beyond the borders of what had hitherto

¹ Rom. xvi. 1 (Acts xviii. 18); 2 Cor. i. 1, ix. 2. With reference to the later passages we must, it is true, remember that Athens also, where St. Paul had preached, and not quite fruitlessly (Acts xvii. 34), belonged to Achaia. Stephanus, who, from the time of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, took part with others in the intercourse between St. Paul and the Corinthians, was not a Corinthian by birth, but had undoubtedly been converted and baptized by St. Paul in Athens, for he and his family are called the "firstlings of Achaia" (1 Cor. xvi. 15). He had since then dwelt in Corinth, and had shortly before come to St. Paul at Corinth with the messengers of the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 17). St. Paul mentions him in such a casual manner (1 Cor. i. 16) that we can see St. Paul had really no need to mention him at all in an Epistle addressed to the local community of Corinth.

² Acts xviii. 19, xix. 1, 8, 10, 22, xx. 18, 31.

³ 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Acts xix. 10; Col. i. 4-7 f., ii. 1, iv. 13; Eph. i. 15, iii. 2.

been his sphere of work ; and it was again to a central point that he turned, indeed, the central point of the then civilized world. He wished first to visit the communities in Macedonia and Greece, and then to make a journey to Jerusalem ; and “ after,” said he, “ I must also see Rome.”¹ And when, six months later, he stopped in Macedonia on his way to Greece, he always kept this distant aim before him, even in the midst of the agitating transactions with the Corinthian community. It seemed to depend on the growth of faith in the Corinthians, that is, restoration, above all, of Church order there, whether he would be able to fulfil his intention of carrying the gospel farther west. His anxiety about the continuation of his work in Greece must have been relieved when, during a sojourn there of several months, he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. When announcing his approaching arrival in Rome, planned years before, but now near at hand, he speaks in strikingly modest terms of his intended missionary preaching in Rome. He, also, as a missionary, wished to have some fruit in Rome ; it ought not to seem as though the missionary who was elsewhere so eager for results, and who worked in a wider sphere than any other, were afraid to appear in Rome as a preacher where work was so difficult and dangerous. He did not, and, according to his principles, he could not, anticipate a long stay in Rome, for a thriving community existed there already, to his joy and the joy of all Christendom. St. Paul had always looked upon it as his especial mission to work only where he laid the foundation, and not to build upon that of another man. Thus Rome could only be a temporary abode for him, and it was in accordance with the method he had hitherto followed that he left the spread of the gospel in the neighbourhood of Rome and the whole

¹ Acts xix. 21 ; 2 Cor. x. 15 f. ; Rom. i. 8-16, xv. 22-32 ; Rom. xv. 20 ; 2 Cor. x. 15 (1 Cor. iii. 10).

of Italy to the Roman community and the other missionaries, and expressed his intention, on the other hand, of himself preaching in Spain.

St. Paul's persevering concentration of his whole strength on a few important points, whilst at the same time he was unweariedly pressing forward to the very borders of the then civilized world, gave such an impetus to his work that he was enabled to take that ideal view of the whole mission field which we might wish every missionary to have. If he had looked upon it as his mission to win as many individual souls as possible, no matter where, for the kingdom of God, he might have spent his life in Antioch, or in any province in the interior of Asia Minor. But then he could not in good faith have spoken with more truth of a Syrian or Lycaonian Church than he now spoke of Macedonia and Greece as Christianized lands.¹ Thus he could write to the Romans that he had preached the gospel from Jerusalem to the north-west frontier of Greece, round about Illyricum, and that he had fulfilled his task as a missionary in the lands through which he had wandered, so that there was no more room for an activity such as his in the lands surrounding the eastern half of the Mediterranean.² Thus it was granted to him, when certain death was before his

¹ 2 Cor. ix. 2; comp. Acts viii. 14; "Samaria had received the word of God."

² Rom. xv. 19, 23. It is very remarkable that he does not take Egypt and Alexandria into consideration here. The reasons must lie in facts of the history of missions, at which we can only guess. We do not know where Barnabas, who at the time of 1 Cor. ix. 6 was still travelling as a missionary, and Mark, after his dispute with St. Paul at Cyprus, betook themselves. Mark is considered by early tradition to have been the founder of the Alexandrian Church (Eus. *H. E.* ii. 16; *Theoph.* ed. Mai, *Nova Bibl.* iv. 121; and probably also by Theophilus in his lost historical work; also *Malalas*, x. ed. Bonn, p. 252; comp. my *Forschungen*, ii. 6, iii. 58). According to *Clem. Hom.* i. 9-14, Barnabas had also preached in Alexandria. The way from Antioch by Cyprus to Egypt was not unknown. Thoughts of Latin Africa raise similar questions, which we cannot well dismiss from our minds, with reference to 2 Tim. iv. 17 (see p. 463).

eyes, and he expected nothing more than a blessed departure and the crown of righteousness from the hand of a righteous Judge, to be able to look back upon the course of his ministry as complete, and to feel that he had reached the goal (2 Tim. iv. 6-8, 16-18). It had not all come to pass as he expected. He had not come to Rome as a missionary carrying out his own plans, but as a prisoner upon trial ; and not for a stay that he could lengthen or shorten as he liked, according to the course that things might take, but for a stay of more than two years, during which he had not full control even over his own person. In spite of this his mission work there was most important. But he could not then have said immediately after it that he had finished his course. These words in his solemn testament would not have been the expression of a thankful idealism, but only a hollow phrase, if, as he had intended years before, St. Paul had not preached the gospel in far distant western lands beyond Rome ; if he had not, before he departed out of this world, gone "to the very borders of the West," as is said of him by his younger contemporary, Clement of Rome. This is not the place to test the old traditions, with which we can only find fault for their meagreness, nor the assertions of modern critics so devoid of tradition which are set forth as historical facts. I will only express a hope that, in opposition to the subterfuges of even the newer exegetists most worthy of honour, the old ecclesiastical commentary will be maintained which found proof in 2 Timothy iv. 16, that St. Paul, after a lengthened imprisonment, was set at liberty again ; that he again took up his course, which had been interrupted ; and that this time he succeeded in reaching his goal. If this suggestion is right, we have here original testimony of the greatest weight, even should the second Epistle to Timothy prove to be an apocryphal writing of post-Apostolic times. It is nothing new which St. Paul

relates to Timothy when he reminds his friend at the end of this letter, so rich in reminiscences of former legal proceedings in which he was left in the lurch, that the Lord stood by him and strengthened him, so that he was saved from the lion's mouth—that is, from danger to life—from which there was apparently no escape. It seems to have been the Divine purpose that the missionary preaching should be brought to a conclusion by St. Paul himself, and not by other missionaries after him, and that all nations should hear it. It is certain, on the one hand, that St. Paul, as a religious man, would not ascribe to the Lord an intention that could neither be carried out in the future nor had been carried out up to the present; while, on the other hand, at the time he wrote, St. Paul no longer hoped for release and new earthly activity, but only for a blessed entrance into the "heavenly kingdom" of Jesus. Again, it is also quite as certain that in the interval he had seen this purpose of the Lord fulfilled. During that interval, after his first legal defence, St. Paul had carried the gospel far beyond the former boundaries; he had reached the goal that he had had in view for years—he had preached in Spain. Then and only then he could speak, as he did at the time he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, of his life's work in general, and of his task on the shores of the eastern half of the Mediterranean, as discharged. Here, as there, his language is enthusiastic. Had then *all* nations really accepted the preaching? And all from St. Paul? In order to look upon this mode of viewing things as natural, we must add the other historical allusions which are to be found in connexion with it.

Titus, who had long been St. Paul's valued coadjutor, had gone to Dalmatia, a certain Crescens, of whom we know nothing further, to Gaul, both surely for no other object than missionary work. Italy was cared for by the large

missionary community in Rome. St. Paul himself had visited Spain. Who knows if even then some grains of seed may not already have fallen on the fruitful soil of Egypt and of Latin Africa? But the little that we do know explains to us the last words that have come down to us from the great converter of nations.

In the last remarks we may find at least one answer to the question as to the means by which St. Paul obtained these results, results which must always remain marvellously great, even when we translate the language of thankful joy for work done into the prose of statistics. One means was the power St. Paul possessed from the very first of drawing helpers to his side, and training them for their common work. On the first missionary journey we see St. Paul and Barnabas going out together as equals to their missionary work, just as Jesus had sent out the Twelve and the Seventy, two and two.

If St. Barnabas appeared at first to stand in the forefront as one who had long been held in high esteem in Christendom, and who was also the highly honoured teacher of St. Paul himself, and probably also on account of his more imposing personal appearance,¹ these relations were soon reversed, when St. Paul, as the more fiery and eloquent orator, was the chief spokesman. The third, John Mark, who joined himself to them, but who, already before they crossed from Cyprus to Asia Minor, had separated from them again in order to return to his mother at Jerusalem, is

¹ This we may conclude from Acts xiv. 12, in comparison with 2 Cor. x. 10, Gal. iv. 14; comp. also *Acta Theclæ*, c. 3, and also my *Gesch. d. Kanons*, ii. 903 f. Barnabas is placed first in Acts xiii. 2-7, and for the reasons just mentioned (because Zeus was named before Hermes), and also in xiv. 12-14. St. Paul, on the other hand, is placed first in Acts xiii. 43, 46, 50; xv. 2, 12, 22, 35. That Barnabas is mentioned before St. Paul, xv. 25, in the letter of the Apostles and Elders of Jerusalem is explained by the fact that he was more closely connected with the writers of the letter.

described as their minister or fellow-labourer.¹ The context of the passage in which we read this shows that a servant is not referred to, who carried the missionaries' baggage, but rather a helper in preaching. When St. Paul, after a long estrangement, came across St. Mark again in Rome, the latter worked quite independently as a missionary, but yet in co-operation with him. In his last Epistle St. Paul begs St. Timothy to bring St. Mark, who had in the meantime been in the East, to Rome with him, because he was very profitable to him for the ministry. This cannot refer to the outward service and care of the imprisoned Apostle. When necessary this would naturally have been undertaken by the members of the inner circle, the physician St. Luke, who had not forsaken the Apostle, and Timothy himself when he came to Rome. It was rather for mission work that a man like Mark appeared of such incalculable worth to St. Paul. Important missionary interests were at stake when St. Paul and Barnabas contended so sharply as to whether they should take Mark with them on their second missionary journey, after he had shown a want of courage on the first, that they parted asunder the one from the other for good. We can gather to some extent in what sense a man like Mark would be of importance to St. Paul, from his choice of a companion when he separated from Barnabas and Mark. Silas, or Silvanus,² whom he then prevailed on to accompany him, had formerly been a leading figure in the community at Jerusalem. He had also been sent with Judas Barsabas as an ambassador from the mother community to carry the decisions of the Apostles' College to Antioch, and had expounded the thoughts out of which

¹ Acts xiii. 5 (comp. xii. 12, 25), xiii. 13, xv. 37-39; Col. iv. 10; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11; 1 Peter v. 13; comp. Klostermann, *Das Markus-evangelium*, p. 338.

² Acts xv. 22, 32, 40.—2 Cor. i. 19, with the Epistles to the Thessalonians, is especially important with reference to his later position.

these decisions had grown by word of mouth with zeal and success. He was therefore well acquainted with the course which had been taken by missions to the Gentiles under the guidance of St. Paul. This was an indispensable qualification for the coadjutor of St. Paul in this sphere, but not the real reason why St. Paul chose him as his helper. It is much more probable that the same considerations weighed with him now which had caused him to value Mark. Though certain of his own faith and of his call, yet St. Paul could not conceal from himself his deficiency in that he had not been Jesus' disciple, neither had he spent any length of time at the source of evangelical tradition. Now missionary preaching without lively narratives of the words and deeds of Jesus would have been a monstrosity. We should form a very peculiar idea of St. Paul as a missionary, and still more of his willing listeners, if we were to suppose that he obtained success by means of a "gospel" without an abundance of historical details. We learn from the few passages in his Epistles in which he refers back to his fundamental teaching, that very many historical events, some of them only by this means incidentally made known to us by him, were contained in his missionary sermons.¹ This is only confirmed by the Acts of the Apostles. We must not indeed take addresses such as those at Lystra and on the Areopagus at Athens as examples, for both of these were utterances called forth by special events which had preceded the missionary sermons.² The only sermon which pictures to us his missionary addresses was that preached in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia; but this is also in great measure an outline of gospel history, and all that we possess of it in Acts xiii. 16-41 is of course only a

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 1-8, xi. 23-25; comp. 1 Tim. vi. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 8.

² Acts xiv. 15-17; comp. with v. 7-9; Acts xvii. 22-31; comp. with v. 17 f.

sketch which in reality corresponded to an amplification that was much more rich in form and colour. Further, the manner in which St. Paul reminds the newly formed communities of single sayings of Jesus,¹ or requires that the word of Christ should dwell in them richly (Col. iii. 16 ; 1 Tim. vi. 3), and the manner in which he insists on the identity of his gospel, that is of his missionary preaching, with the preaching of Jesus, or the testimony, words, and gospel of Christ,² presupposes, not only that he set great value on evangelistic tradition himself, but that also it was imparted in large measure in the earliest preaching. It was therefore important that St. Paul should be accompanied by men like Silas and Barnabas, who had from their earliest days belonged to the community in Jerusalem, the original source of Evangelical tradition, or else by a young man like Mark, who, as the son of an old Christian family in Jerusalem, had grown up well acquainted with the narratives of Jesus' disciples. They could confirm and complete by vivid accounts of the "Lord Jesus," the witness of St. Paul, who when he stood forth alone, would scarcely be able, as at first in Corinth, to preach anything but the great fundamental fact of "Christ crucified." And they must have acted thus if the condition of Christendom in the communities of St. Paul is to be clearly understood.

Other helpers, whom St. Paul had first converted and then had attached to himself in common work, served him in other ways. In the rapid progress of the Pauline mission, which was oftentimes brought about by external pressure, it was a difficult task, and one that demanded ever more and more strength, to maintain the continuous growth of Christian life in the scarcely formed communities in a right

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 15, v. 2 ; 1 Cor. vii. 10 (12, 25), ix. 14, xi. 23 ff. ; Acts xx. 35.

² For instance, Rom. xvi. 25, iv. 17 ; 1 Cor. i. 6 ; Gal. i. 7 ; 2 Thess. i. 8.

direction, and to preserve unweakened over them the influence of the founder of the community. This "care of all the Churches," for which we are chiefly indebted to the Epistles of St. Paul which have come down to us, must have often suggested to him the vain wish that he could be at the same time in two different places.¹ It would have weighed down the lonely Apostle, in spite of all his gifts, and have confined his work within very narrow limits had he not known how to attach helpers to himself who yearly increased in numbers. When he was driven out of Macedonia, he went first to Greece, and left Silas and Timothy behind for a time to continue the interrupted work in Berea. Full of anxiety on account of the community at Thessalonica, he sent Timothy back there from Athens. He arrived in Corinth without these two helpers, and while they were occupied in strengthening the youthful communities which had been so lately formed, he was engaged in laying by himself the foundations of a new one at Corinth. When St. Paul was only able to make a short stay in Crete at a later period, he left Titus there in order to organize more fully the community that had just been founded.

What a vivid picture St. Paul's Epistles give us of the constant movement and manifold employments of his fellow-workers! How many of the Apostle's letters, which we no longer possess, must have been carried in their wallets by those friends of whose journeys hither and thither we hear! and how many commissions, of which we possess no information, must have been carried personally and by word of mouth by the bearers of the letters we do possess!

There were also tasks which lasted longer, and which St. Paul could not intrust to the native powers of the local communities, but which he made over to his missionary helpers. Timothy had been a missionary from the time

¹ Gal. iv. 20; 1 Thess. ii. 19; 1 Cor. v. 3 f.; comp. 2 Cor. xi. 28 f.

that St. Paul chose him as his companion, and the presbytery of the community in his native place, following prophetic voices, had set him apart by the laying on of hands.¹ He was one of the missionaries of Macedonia and Greece, and it is with reference to this his calling that St. Paul finally urges him to do the work of an Evangelist² unweariedly, for to "preach the gospel" does not mean anywhere in the New Testament training the community in the rudiments of the faith, but the declaration of salvation in Christ Jesus to those who do not know of it, or, at all events, do not as yet believe in it. But it also appears as an outcome of his evangelistic or missionary work that Timothy, when St. Paul wrote his first Epistle to him, had been working as a teacher for some time, at his desire, in the community at Ephesus, which had long been founded, and watching over all the regulations for the life of the community at the same time.

St. Paul also allowed the helpers who were under his influence to do independent missionary work where the foundations had yet to be laid. The Colossian Epaphras is represented to us throughout as the founder of the Ephesian community, perhaps also of the neighbouring communities of Laodicea and Hierapolis.³ Crescens and Titus must

¹ Acts xvi. 1-4; 1 Tim. iv. 14; comp. i. 18; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Thess. i. 1-6, iii. 2; 2 Cor. i. 19.

² 2 Tim. iv. 5; comp. i. 8. It seems natural that the missionaries, who no longer wandered from place to place, but had become more or less settled, were called "Evangelists" (Acts xxi. 8; Eph. iv. 11) rather than "Apostles," for the idea of an itinerant preacher clung to the latter word in its wider application beyond the circle of those to whom Christ Himself had given it as an inalienable title. When it became the custom to call the writers of the Gospels Evangelists, "Evangelists" or "Apostles," in the sense of the New Testament, with reference to the doctrine of the Apostles scarcely existed. Comp., however, Eus. *H. E.* iii. 37, the heading and the text, as a proof that an "Evangelist" = missionary.

³ Col. i. 7, iv. 12; Philemon 23.

have been the first missionaries to set foot in Dalmatia and Gaul. But wherever these helpers of St. Paul founded communities they established a spiritual connexion between the new converts and the great leader in the missionary field.¹ St. Paul loved to describe his helpers as fellow-soldiers, his comrades in the service of Christ. They must have looked up to him as their general, whose plans and directions they need only conscientiously carry out in order to please their Commander-in-chief and heavenly King. To the Apostle himself, and to us also, the results of the work of his scholars appear as a portion of his own life's work. He owed his great success not least to his power of allowing himself to be presented and supported, not only by individuals, but also by communities.

He was not satisfied with often urging on his communities the duty of making a favourable impression as to the moral character of Christendom on their heathen surroundings by a conversation worthy of the gospel, and of thus destroying their adverse prejudices. He also claimed, to a great extent, the material support of the communities. It is true that he renounced² all claim to the right of an Evangelist, though in itself he fully acknowledged it, to receive his livelihood in return for the work of his calling, that is, according to the directions of Jesus, to allow himself to be supported by the willing hearers of the gospel. He provided for his own support, as we know, by working at a loom with his own hands. As, on one occasion, he unites Barnabas with himself in this respect, we may conclude that he and his companions carried out this plan on the first missionary journey. It was certainly not a precautionary measure that was unnecessary. Had he acted otherwise, the evil repute of greed that hung over the Jews might easily have

¹ Col. i. 8, ii. 5, iv. 7 f.; Eph. i. 15 f., iii. 1 f., vi. 21 f.

² Phil. ii. 25-30, iv. 10-20; comp. 1 Tim. i. 16 f.

cast a deep shadow over the whole work of missions to the Gentiles. St. Paul was especially careful to carry out his principle of preaching the gospel without cost in commercial towns like Corinth. It was not till he was imprisoned that he was obliged to allow his friends at a distance to alleviate his outward circumstances by gifts of money and other proofs of love.¹ But missions cost money then, as much as they do now, irrespective of the missionaries' daily bread. St. Paul's long and constant journeys in themselves required funds, which St. Paul could neither supply himself by the work of his hands, nor demand of communities which were scarcely formed.² But yet they very early recognized it as their duty to support the Apostle in this respect. From the very first the community at Philippi participated in missionary work by constant gifts of money.³

Those collections for the good of the impoverished Christians in Jerusalem and Palestine, which St. Paul gathered so zealously in the whole circle of the Gentile-Christian communities, stood in close connexion with missions.⁴ It was not only a question of fulfilling the duty of showing loving-kindness to suffering and needy brethren ; it was still more important to prove to the Jewish Christians by act, that in the communities under the commanding influence of the Apostle to the Gentiles love and gratitude for the mother community were fostered, as well as a warm sense of fraternity. It was also necessary to show that they on their part were ready to return good for evil. It was not only the blessing of the gospel which had been sent out from Palestine into

¹ Possibly also the hire of the place of assembly (Acts xix. 9).

² 1 Cor. ix. 4-18 ; 2 Cor. xi. 7-12, xii. 14-18 ; Thess. ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8 ; Acts xviii. 3, xx. 34.

³ Phil. i. 3 ff., iv. 15 f. (comp. my *Abhandlung in der Zeitschr. für kirchl. Wiss.* 1885, pp. 1-4 ff.) ; 2 Cor. xi. 8 f.

⁴ Gal. ii. 10 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4 (15 f.) ; 2 Cor. viii. and ix. ; Rom. xv. 25-28 ; Acts xi. 29 f., xxiv. 17.

Gentile lands, Palestine was also the home of those Judaizing missionaries who followed everywhere at the Apostle's heels and were always raising, chiefly behind his back, the most odious difficulties. St. Paul could not have replied to this hostility in a nobler manner, or in one more easily understood by the community, than when, accompanied by deputies from the Greek, Macedonian, and Asiatic communities, he brought the large proceeds of the collections which had been made for a long time past to Jerusalem. As at a former time, ignoring the Judaizers, he had resolved, not without some self-sacrifice, to assure himself of the approval of the authorities in Jerusalem, so now he was careful to protect himself in the rear by all permissible methods when he thought of turning from the East to the West. Again, the letter written some months earlier to the Romans did much to smother the seeds of distrust in him and his work, which had been sown broadcast by the Jewish Christians, and thus to clear out of the way a serious hindrance to the successful progress of the mission. The Apostle was in large measure successful. Although, as we have seen, he had to complain in Rome of the disturbing rivalry of the Jewish missionaries, he nevertheless worked with such great success, and made such an abiding impression on the community which he found in existence there, that he has lived on in their remembrance as one of their leading founders—St. Paul beside St. Peter.

Christians from Palestine who appealed to St. James or St. Peter had in early days striven everywhere to stop the way of the Apostle to the Gentiles. St. Peter himself, probably at a considerably earlier date, had once appeared at Antioch, and had called down on himself a sharp rebuke from St. Paul. Probably their real agreement was accelerated rather than retarded thereby. But how differently circumstances were now shaping themselves as the days of

St. Paul were drawing to a close ! Mark, St. Peter's spiritual son and the cousin of Barnabas, who had once been declared by St. Paul unfit for missionary service, now gave him unclouded joy. He longed to have him with him. If St. Peter did come to Rome and write his first Epistle there, we may conclude that St. Peter felt that the hour had come to enter the wide regions, in which St. Paul had broken up the ground, with his own work, and thus to confirm the work of St. Paul. Silas St. Paul's former companion, was the mediator between St. Peter at Rome and the Gentile Christians in Asia Minor. Soon after we see the other leaders of the Palestinian Church beginning to labour in the Church of Asia Minor—St. John at Ephesus, St. Philip in Hierapolis, and others also who have left fewer certain traces of their work in those regions. During the tumult of war which raged in Palestine both before and after the year 70 A.D., the gospel was silenced, and those who had preached it there were set free for a wider field of labour. That those who could say, "That which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked on, and our hands have handled . . . that declare we unto you," should settle in Asia Minor and elsewhere was certainly an incalculable gain, above all to the Christians living there who loved Jesus, though they had not seen Him ; but it must also have given an impetus to the advancement of missionary work in those regions. The existing communities were still candlesticks which allowed the light of Christian experience to shine in their Gentile and Jewish surroundings.¹ In the Revelation the Lord uses words to the community in Philadelphia which would almost seem more suitable for an individual missionary. "See, I have set before thee an open door."² New communities also came into existence—one, for instance, at

¹ Rev. i. 20, ii. 1-5 ff. ; comp. Phil. ii. 15 f.

² Rev. iii. 8 ; comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 8 ; 2 Cor. ii. 12 ; Col. iv. 3.

Smyrna—where, according to the testimony, rightly understood, of their Bishop Polycarp, there had been none in St. Paul's time, though one did exist at the time of the Revelation.¹ According to a good old tradition, the Apostle St. John used to make journeys from Ephesus, when very old, to the surrounding districts, visiting heathen villages and organizing new communities.² There were also some amongst his scholars who went from place to place seeking to bring the gospel unto the heathen, and, where Christians lived, claiming their hospitality, and thus giving them the opportunity of being fellow-workers in the truth. (3 John 8.) We must conclude from the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* that this privilege was sometimes misused.³ The communities were to beware of vagrants who wished to be thought Apostles. Not a single great missionary's name shines out upon us from that gloomy time. We shall be right in concluding that the times of the Apostles—that is of the great missionaries—closed with the death of St. John.

It cannot have been much later that the Roman Christian Hermas, the author of *The Shepherd*, pictured to himself the growth of the Church thus far in a vision, under the form of a gigantic tower. This tower was founded on the Rock, the Eternal Son of God, who had appeared at the end of the times. In as far as it had attained to completion it had been built by forty Apostles and teachers, who had been called away from the earthly building place. Then there was a pause; further building was deferred. The building had not yet been completed, but it would be completed, and then the Lord would come. It was thus that a simple Christian, on the border line of the first and second centuries, viewed the state of missions at that period, and

¹ Rev. ii. 8; *Polyc. ad Phil.* 11; comp. my *Forschungen*, iv. 253–259.

² Clemens Alex., *Quis dives salvus*, § 42.

³ c. 11, and, in addition, my *Forschungen*, iii. 299.

thus that he believed in their completion. May God preserve us in this faith at a time which, in comparison with the times of the Apostle, may seem insignificant and poor in strength and in gifts, but which, nevertheless, does not deserve to be called a time in which missionary work is at a standstill.

THEOD. ZAHN.

*LITERARY ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BOOK OF
ECCLESIASTICUS.*

vii. 15. *Hate not laborious work, neither husbandry, which the Most High hath ordained.*

The Spirit testifies [says St. Patrick in his *Confession* (ch. i.)], "and husbandry was ordained by the Most High." Therefore I, first a rustic, then a fugitive, unlearned indeed, unknowing how to provide for the future—but I know this most certainly, that before I was humbled I was like a stone lying in deep mud; and He who is mighty came and in His own mercy raised me up and placed me on the top of the wall.

vii. 23–24. *Hast thou children? instruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth. Hast thou daughters? have a care of their body, and shew not thyself cheerful toward them.*

The discipline of the family, in those days, was of a far more rigid kind than now. The frown, the harsh rebuke, the frequent application of the rod, enjoined by Scriptural authority, were used, not merely in the way of punishment for actual offences, but as a wholesome regimen for the growth and promotion of all childish virtues.—HAWTHORNE: *The Scarlet Letter* (ch. vi.).

viii. 9. *Miss not the discourse of the aged; for they also learned of their fathers.*

We cannot but lament [says Lowell in *My Study Windows*] that Mr. Quincy did not earlier begin to keep a diary. "Miss not the discourses of the elders," though now put in the Apocrypha, is a wise precept, but incomplete unless we add, "Nor cease from