

The Indian Church Commentaries

Edited under the general supervision
of the Bishops of Lahore & Rangoon

GENERAL EDITOR

The Rev. C. F. Andrews, M.A.

Cambridge Brotherhood, Delhi

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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The Indian Church Commentaries

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

BY

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Madras

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POSTSCRIPTUM

Books consulted in the preparation of this volume

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. COMMENTARIES ON THE ACTS by | } | Knowing (in <i>Expositor's Greek Testament</i>);
Rackham (<i>Westminster Commentaries</i>);
H. A. W. Meyer;
Cook (<i>Speaker's Commentary</i>);
Lumby (<i>Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges</i>);
Ellicot. |
| 2. OTHER COMMENTARIES. | } | Plummer (<i>St. Luke</i>);
Armitage Robinson (<i>Ephesians</i>);
Lightfoot (<i>Epistles of St. Paul</i>). |
| 3. OTHER BOOKS .. | } | Sir W. M. Ramsay (<i>St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen</i> ; etc.);
Harnack (<i>St. Luke the Physician</i>);
Deissmann (<i>New Light on the New Testament</i>);
Conybeare and Howson (<i>Life and Epistles of St. Paul</i>);
Hastings (<i>Dictionary of the Bible</i> , various articles). |

Special acknowledgment and thanks are due to Sir W. M. Ramsay as well for help derived from his published books and articles as for his kind permission to use and adapt one of his excellent maps.

N.B.—Since the Introduction to this book was written, Professor Harnack has contended for an earlier date of Acts than that here associated with his name.

Quotations from the Old Testament in Acts

Acts i. 20	..	..	Ps. lxix. 25; cix. 8
ii. 17-21	..	..	Joel ii. 28-32
25-8	..	..	Ps. xvi. 8-11
34-5	..	..	„ cx. 1
iii. 22-3	..	..	Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19
25	..	..	Gen. xxii. 18
iv. 11	..	..	Ps. cxviii. 22
25 6	..	..	„ ii. 1, 2
vii. 3	..	..	Gen. xii. 1
6, 7	..	..	„ xv. 13, 14; (Exod. iii. 12)
26-8	..	..	Exod. ii. 13, 14
32-4	..	..	„ iii. 5-10
37	..	..	Deut. xviii. 15, 18
40	..	..	Exod. xxxii. 1
42-3	..	..	Amos v. 25-7
49, 50	..	..	Isa. lxvi. 1, 2
viii. 32-3	..	..	„ liii. 7, 8
xiii. 22	..	..	Ps. lxxxix. 20; (1 Sam. xiii. 14)
33	..	..	„ ii. 7
34	..	..	Isa. lv. 3
35	..	..	Ps. xvi. 10
41	..	..	Hab. i. 5
47	..	..	Isa. xlix. 6
xv. 16, 17	..	..	Amos ix. 11, 12
xxiii. 5	..	..	Exod. xxii. 28
xxviii. 26, 27	..	..	Isa. vi. 9, 10

ERRATA

PAGE	LINE	FOR	READ
xvii	2	'synchronizes'	'synchronizes (according to a theory not accepted in this book; <i>vide</i> p. 278)'
xxxvii	5	'som'	'some'
xc	23	'Areopagas'	'Areopagus'
xcii	21	'Tertullian'	'Tertullus'
5	3	'miraculou'	'miraculous'
20	34	'knowledge'	'knowledge'
52	28	'him'	'Him'
63	25	'Jhon'	'John'
67	23	The words 'Cf. Mark i. 31; ix. 27; Luke vii. 54' should follow 'by the right hand' in next line.	
75	5	'Paulo-Lukan'	'chiefly Paulo-Lukan'
90	25	'probabaly'	'probably'
109	26	'Jer. xxxiii.'	'Jer. xxxii'
120	29	'undesgned'	'undesigned'
181	Headline	'VIII. 1'	'VII. 60'
194	Marginal reading	'wit'	'wilt'
202	35	'Stratos'	'Strato's'
220	5	'fa'	'far'
235	25	'The pronoun'	'The pronoun, I'
235	28	'Well reputed'	'Well reported'
245	19	'dectrine'	'doctrine'
248	9	'Gospels'	'Gospel'
249	18	'eagar'	'eager'
255	27	'Symeon, Niger'	'Symeon Niger'

PAGE	LINE	FOR	READ
258	1	'ful'	'full'
276	30	'xii. 13'	'xii. 1-8'
288	7	'xxvii. 10-11'	'xxviii. 10-11'
339	34	'late'	'later'
361	16	'ii. 21-16'	'ii. 12-16'
363	23	'v. 9, note'	'vi. 9, note'
364	8	'Chr tian'	'Christian'
364	16	'bringin'	'bringing'
364	18	'whic'	'which'
390	25-6	'Phil. 23'	'Phil. i. 23'
393	28	'Cenchraea'	'Cenchreae'
441	7	'n Lydia'	'in Lydia'
443	23	'heart an'	'heart and'
447	23	'ii. 12'	'ii. 11'
493	29	'More accurately'	'More exactly'
505	25-6	'circumstance'	'circumstances'
560	24	'The ropse'	'The ropes'
583	32	'i. 19-30'	'ii. 19-30'
584	18	'of 1 Tim.'	'cf. 1 Tim.'

GENERAL PREFACE

BY THE

BISHOP OF LAHORE

A FEW words of introduction are necessary to explain the general purpose of this series of Commentaries. The work was commenced under the general supervision of the Bishop of Rangoon and myself, acting as a Committee appointed in accordance with a Resolution of the Synod of Indian Bishops which met in 1900. Subsequently, with the sanction of the Metropolitan, the Rev. C. F. Andrews, of the Cambridge Brotherhood, Delhi, was appointed General Editor. The work of revision before publication is being left mainly in his hands, but a general Episcopal supervision of the work will still be maintained.

It is hoped that these Commentaries, while presenting a direct and scholarly interpretation of the New Testament, based upon the work of the great English Commentators, will, at the same time, contain such references to Eastern religious thought and life as may make them serviceable to both Christian and non-Christian. The series will, in due course, if funds permit, be translated

into the leading Indian Vernaculars. It is inevitable that in the interpretation of the New Testament there will be differences of opinion, and it has seemed best to allow these differences to appear in the series rather than to aim at a colourless uniformity. The final responsibility for the views taken of particular passages will rest with the individual contributors.

The thanks of the Synod Committee are given to the Editors of the Cambridge Bible for Colleges and Schools for their kind permission to quote freely from that Series, and also to the Cambridge University Press and the Delegates of the Oxford University Press for a similar permission to use the text of the English Revised Version in this volume.

G. A. LAHORE.

BISHOPSBOURNE,

LAHORE.

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INTRODUCTION

I. AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHENTICITY

ALTHOUGH the author's name is nowhere mentioned in the book itself, we may take it for granted, with little fear of contradiction, that the Acts of the Apostles was written by St. Luke. The evidence in his favour is at once strong and convincing. Since independent scholars such as Dr. Harnack, Sir W. Ramsay, and Professor Burkitt, who have investigated the subject in the most thorough manner from different standpoints, are all agreed as to the authenticity of the Acts, it may suffice here to indicate briefly the main lines of argument which appear to be conclusive.

1. INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

(1) The author of the Acts is identical with the author of the third Gospel.—This is established by the following considerations:—

- (i) *Harmony of titles.* Both treatises are addressed to a person named Theophilus (Luke i. 3; Acts i. 1), and the latter book refers distinctly to the former one, taking its existence as an accepted fact, and expanding and unfolding, in its opening section, the closing sentences of the Gospel.

- (ii) *Unity of style and diction.* Both books are characterized by great versatility of style. The author can be as Hebraistic as the Septuagint and as free from Hebraisms as the classical Plutarch (Plummer). Doubtless, many of his Hebraisms are due to Aramaic sources used in the compilation of his histories, and others, again, to his intimate acquaintance with the Old Testament Scriptures. However this may be, his command of the Greek language is striking, as also the richness and fulness of his vocabulary. He uses nearly eight hundred words found nowhere else in the New Testament, of which about four hundred and fifty occur in the Acts of the Apostles. Similarly, his writings contain many phrases, expressions, and grammatical constructions which differentiate him from the other New Testament writers. Both books, moreover, contain to a very considerable extent identical words, constructions, and idioms, pointing unmistakably to an identity of authorship. Any careful reader, after comparing the two, will readily convince himself on this point.
- (iii) *Unity of tone and underlying character.* The Gospel and the Acts alike contain, so to speak, a history of beginnings only, in the one case of our Lord's work on earth, in the other of His work from heaven through His people. We mark also, in both books, the strong human

sympathy which characterizes the writer. He loves to dwell on miracles of healing; to trace features of love, charity, and mercy; to call attention to such details of suffering, poverty, and hardship as will appeal to his readers' tenderest human feelings. And just as, in the Gospel, the universality of God's grace is strongly emphasized, so, in the Acts, we are shewn the same great heart of love yearning for the salvation of all mankind. Attention, too, is attracted, in both books, by the special notice the author takes of women, who play an important part in both histories. Prayer also is markedly prominent; the appearances of angels are noteworthy; joy is emphasized; and medical phraseology is strikingly present. These, and other features which might be mentioned, all speak loudly of identity of authorship.

(2) The author in question was a companion of St. Paul.

- (i) *Certain portions of the book are written in the first person plural.* (chapters xvi. 10-17; xx. 5-15; xxi. 1-18; xxvii. 1 to xxviii. 16). These 'we sections', as they are now usually termed, prove conclusively that their writer was present with the great apostle at Troas and Philippi; that he accompanied him, at a somewhat later period, from Philippi to Jerusalem; and that he was with him also in his eventful voyage from Cæsarea to imperial Rome.

From the manner in which the sections occur in the narrative, we may reasonably infer that the writer was also present with St. Paul when he addressed the Ephesian elders at Miletus, and that he continued close at hand during the apostle's imprisonment at Jerusalem and Cæsarea, though there was no need to speak again in the first person till they took ship together for Rome.

- (ii) *That the author of the 'we sections' wrote also the other portions of the book* is clearly proved by the unmistakable identity of literary style. The words, phrases, and idioms which characterize the writer of these special sections are found throughout the whole of the Acts. Professor Harnack in his book, *Luke the Physician*, has drawn up a list of about sixty-seven words or phrases which are common to the 'we sections' and the rest of the Book, but which are wanting in all four Gospels; and has otherwise examined the subject in an exhaustive manner. There can be no reasonable doubt that the same person wrote the whole narrative of the Acts, and therefore that he was a companion of St. Paul.
- (iii) *There is a distinct Pauline complexion, so to speak, both about the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.* The universality and freedom of the Gospel are strongly emphasized and shew the writer's theological affinity with the apostle of the Gentiles. This affinity, further,

appears in his vocabulary and phraseology. Quite an extensive list of words and expressions can be drawn up which are common and peculiar to our author and St. Paul among the writers of the New Testament. These facts, taken together, are suggestive of sympathy and personal association between the two evangelists.

(3) The author in question was none other than St. Luke.—Of all St. Paul's companions, he only fulfils all the conditions of the case. Timothy is excluded, among other reasons, by the statements of Acts xx. 4-5; Silas by the notice contained in xv. 22; and Titus by a comparison of Gal. ii. 1-3 with Acts xv. 1-30. On the other hand, all the evidence goes to support the traditional authorship of St. Luke.

(i) *St. Luke was one of the apostle's chief companions.* He was with him, certainly, during his first Roman imprisonment (Col. iv, 14; Philem. 24), and the presumption is that he accompanied him thither. St. Paul speaks of him in terms of special affection as 'the physician, the beloved one'. At a later period he proved constant and faithful in his companionship (2 Tim. iv. 11), and that at a critical time when other friends had been found faithless. Though we cannot prove from Scripture that he was associated with the apostle prior to his Roman imprisonment, the inference is certainly in favour of such previous association.

- (ii) *St. Luke was a Gentile, and not a member of the Jewish nation.* This is clear from Col. iv. 11, 14, where he is contradistinguished from those 'of the circumcision'. Now the writer of the Acts is remarkable for his Gentile characteristics and proclivities. Moreover, he shews himself familiar with the geographical and political conditions of Europe in a degree scarcely possible to a Jew; whereas his narratives are, if anything, deficient in specific details about the geography of Palestine. The whole tone of the book, also, is distinctively Grecian.
- (iii) *St. Luke was a physician by profession.* See Col. iv. 14. This harmonizes with the fact that the writer of the third Gospel and the Acts dwells carefully on the nature of diseases (e.g., Luke viii. 43; xiii. 11-13; Acts iii. 1-8; ix. 33; xiv. 8; xxviii. 8-9), and also uses technical terminology found in the pages of Greek medical writers. To cite a few instances out of many, he speaks of one 'holden with a great fever' (Luke iv. 38), of 'a man that was palsied' (Luke v. 18, 24; Acts viii. 7; ix. 33), of another that 'had the dropsy' (Luke xiv. 2), of 'surfeiting' (Luke xxi. 34, meaning drunken headache), of one whose 'feet and ankle-bones' received strength (Acts iii. 7), of a 'mist' over the eyes (Acts xiii. 11), of 'fever and dysentery' (Acts xxviii. 8): all expressions of a technical nature.

We conclude, therefore, in view of these converging lines of evidence, that St. Luke, and none other, was the author of the Acts of the Apostles.

2. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE. A brief epitome of this will be sufficient.

Clement of Rome (end of the first century A.D.) has, among other coincidences, an apparent allusion to Acts xx. 35; and Polycarp (early in the second century A.D.) clearly refers to Acts ii. 24 in his Epistle.

The Epistle to Diognetus (about A.D. 117) contains a passage which closely resembles Acts xvii. 24. Justin Martyr (middle of second century A.D.) refers to points which are only recorded in the Acts and apparently alludes to vii. 22.

The Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177) refers, in an unequivocal manner, to the martyrdom of Stephen and uses the words of Acts vii. 60 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge'.

The Muratorian Canon (towards the end of the second century A.D.) mentions the Acts of the Apostles as containing a record by St. Luke 'of those acts of all the apostles which fell under his notice'

Irenaeus (about A.D. 180) has quotations from many chapters of the Acts and shews signs of having made a careful study of it. From the time of Irenaeus, we find our book constantly quoted by Church Fathers, and commentaries written on it.

We see, therefore, by a chain of evidence which takes us back certainly to the middle of the second century, and in all probability to the closing decade of the first, that the early Church was unanimous in accepting the Acts of the Apostles as authoritative, and that it was universally ascribed to the beloved physician Luke.

II. ST. LUKE, THE PHYSICIAN

THE name Luke, or Lucas, appears not to have been in vogue before New Testament times. It is probably a contraction of Lucanus, a name which frequently occurs in old inscriptions, and which is found in some ancient Latin manuscripts both in the superscription and in the subscription of the third Gospel. St. Luke is referred to by name only three times in the New Testament (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11). He is certainly not to be identified with the Lucius of Rom. xvi. 21, who was a kinsman of St. Paul and therefore a Jew by birth. For the same reason he cannot be identical, as some have supposed, with Silas or Silvanus (Acts xv. 22). Nor have we any valid reason for thinking that he is the same person as the Lucius of Acts xiii. 1, especially in view of the fact that the latter name never appears to have been shortened into Luke. That he was the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles has been clearly established in the preceding article.

He first definitely stands forth to view in Acts xvi. 10, in company with St. Paul at Troas, during the

latter's second missionary journey. Since his first appearance nearly synchronizes with an attack of what would seem to have been the apostle's constitutional malady (2 Cor. xii. 7; Gal. iv. 13, 14), which possibly detained him about that time for a season in Galatia, it has been conjectured that he became associated with St. Paul, and afterwards continued with him, in a professional capacity. In support of this view, it is pointed out that the apostle speaks of him as 'Luke, the physician, the beloved one' (Col. iv. 14), as though in tender gratitude for medical services freely rendered. However this may be, it is certain that he accompanied St. Paul to Philippi, on his first visit to that city near the close of A.D. 50 (Acts xvi. 11-18). There we lose sight of him for a time, since he does not appear to have been associated with the apostle during his labours in Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus etc., as recorded in Acts xvii. 1-xix. 41. Our next definite notice of him is found in Acts xx. 5, where we find him once more a companion of St. Paul, and this time also at Philippi, in the spring of A.D. 57. From thence he journeyed with his 'teacher and illuminator' (as Tertullian styles him) to Miletus (Acts xx. 6-16), and it is practically certain that he was present also when the great apostle gave his solemn yet tender charge to the Ephesian elders (xx. 17-38). He continued with his friend and leader during the rest of his journey from Miletus to Jerusalem (xxi. 1-17), and was an eye-witness both of that pathetic farewell scene on the sands at Tyre and of the tearful entreaties of the apostle's loving friends in Philip's house at Caesarea.

We may feel almost sure, too, that he was close alongside through those stormy days of violent opposition in Jerusalem (xxi. 18 to xxiii. 30), for he writes concerning them with the graphic vividness of a personal spectator. He must, also, have followed his friend to Caesarea, as we find him, at a later date, leaving that city in his company *en route* for Rome (xxvii. 1). He shared with St. Paul the dangers and vicissitudes of the memorable sea-voyage which ensued, and was with him when he reached at last the imperial city (xxviii. 16).

It is beyond question, moreover, that he was one of that inner circle of 'fellow-workers' (Col. iv. 14), who frequented the hired dwelling in which the great missionary was confined (Acts xxviii. 30), and who gladly helped their brave comrade in the holy war. As his name is not mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians, he may have been despatched from Rome on some temporary mission, late in A.D. 60 or early in A.D. 61. If so, he returned, at any rate, in time to join in the greetings sent by the apostle, some months later, to Philemon and the Christians of Colossae (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24); and there is little doubt that he continued with St. Paul till his release from prison in the spring of A.D. 62. Probably he shared the apostle's later labours in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor (1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 13, 20; Tit. i. 5), and, it may be, also in the regions of the West (Rom. xv. 28), 'inseparable from Paul', as Irenaeus says. Be that as it may, we know positively that he was with the veteran missionary during his second imprisonment in Rome (2 Tim. iv. 11), faithful at a crisis when many

proved unfaithful. There is something pathetic in the words, 'Only Luke is with me'. With this notice, the 'beloved physician' passes from our view; but we may be allowed the fancy which sees him ministering tenderly to his friend and teacher to the end, and, perhaps, as chief mourner, shedding the last tears of gratitude and affection over the mortal remains of the august martyr when the tyranny of Nero had done its very worst. Truly, we have in St. Luke a touching example of staunch and noble friendship.

Beyond all doubt, our author was a Gentile, and did not belong to those who, in allusion to their Jewish nationality, are called 'those of the circumcision' (Col. iv. 11, 14). His Greek character appears also in his style of language, his versatility, his interest in nautical affairs, and in his general tone. This fact overthrows those traditions which either represent him as one of the Seventy (Luke x. 1) or identify him with the unnamed companion of Cleopas in the walk to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13). He is thus the only one of the New Testament writers who is certainly of Gentile origin.

An early tradition, mentioned by Eusebius and others, makes him a native of Antioch in Syria; and certainly he shews, in the Acts of the Apostles, a special familiarity with all that relates to that city. This would be accounted for, however, if, as many think, he was a Macedonian, by the fact that Antioch, being a Seleucid foundation, had probably a Macedonian element in its population, for it would ensure the maintenance of constant intercourse between the

colonists there and their fatherland in northern Greece. All these, however, are but conjectures and we have no certain knowledge of his birthplace or family. We may add that Chrysostom identified him with 'the brother whose praise is spread through all the churches' (2 Cor. viii. 18); and that others have imagined him as a medical student at Tarsus, coming into contact with the future apostle there. Apart from all surmises, we know enough of his actual life and character to enable us to profit by his example and experience, and some lessons from his history stand out clearly for our learning here in India. He was, in all probability, a convert direct from paganism to Christianity (though he may, of course, have passed into the Church through an intermediate stage of Judaism), and what a noble race he ran! His culture and literary gifts were consecrated wholly to his Master's service. His skill as a physician was used (shall we not believe it?) for the advance and furtherance of the Gospel. He was a loyal fellow-worker, a faithful evangelist, an unfailing friend. Like St. John, with true humility he hides his own name from view.

Be our work literary, medical, or evangelistic, as workers for Christ in India, we may all learn useful lessons from this true, earnest, humble, and faithful convert, and may seek to follow him, even as he followed Christ. His example may well serve as an inspiration to those of India's sons who, like St. Luke, have turned their back on heathen cults to serve in deed and truth the Saviour of the world.

III. DATE OF THE BOOK

WE can determine, within certain limits, the period of the composition of the Acts of the Apostles.

(1) **The writer must have lived among the scenes which he describes.**—In other words, he wrote contemporary history. A careful reading of his narrative will soon convince us of the truth of this statement.

- (i) *His historical accuracy is remarkable*, when tested by a comparison with contemporary writers. For instance, his notices of Gamaliel (v. 34-9; xxii. 3) accord fully with what we know of that great Rabbi from other sources. His account of the character and untimely death of Herod Agrippa I (chapter xii) tallies strikingly with what we read in the pages of Josephus. Similarly, his references to Gallio (xviii. 12), Felix (xxiii. 34; xxiv. 24), Festus (chapter xxv), and Agrippa II (chapter xxvi) harmonize perfectly with what we know of them from other writers of that age. His accuracy is specially noteworthy in the case of the correct technical titles which he gives to the Roman officials in Cyprus (xiii. 7), Philippi (xvi. 22), Thessalonica (xvii. 6), Malta (xxviii. 7). Recent archæological discoveries have confirmed indubitably the correctness of these, even where they had been seriously questioned. No one but a writer describing things as he actually

saw them, or otherwise had personal knowledge of them, could possibly have been so uniformly correct in his descriptions. Even in the few cases in which his accuracy is still impugned, his record will be found to stand every reasonable test (see v. 36-7, notes).

- (ii) *His topographical accuracy is also conspicuous.* Whether he be describing localities at Jerusalem such as Solomon's porch (iii. 11) and the tower of Antonia (xxi. 31-3), or the roads, routes, and towns of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, his notices all accord, and often singularly so, with known facts, and evidence the careful observation of an eye-witness. In particular, his account of the stormy voyage to Malta in chapter xxvii is remarkable for its extreme accuracy, even to the minutest details. This will be elucidated in the notes on that passage and we shall find St. Luke correct in every point, even to the number of fathoms sounded as the ship approached the island.
- (iii) *His graphic description of events and persons* also shows him to be a contemporaneous writer, and, to a great extent, an eye-witness. He writes as one who lives and moves among the circumstances which he depicts, and there is an air of perfect naturalness about the whole narrative. Who but a contemporary could have delineated, as he has done, with perfect accuracy and living warmth, the

characters of the Sadducean priests, the Pharisee doctrinaires, the martyr Stephen, the evangelist Philip, the missionary St. Paul, the vacillating Mark, the amiable Gallio, the courteous centurion Julius? His accounts of the events which transpired at Philippi, Miletus, Tyre, Caesarea, Jerusalem, and Malta are aglow with life and warmth; and the speeches and discourses which abound in his history, though so varied in character, are yet stamped with reality and are perfectly adapted to the circumstances.

We can have no hesitation, therefore, in asserting that the Acts was written by a historian who himself lived and moved and worked amidst the events and circumstances which he so truthfully and graphically records. We have already shewn that the historian in question was St. Luke (Introd. I). Now supposing him to have been only about thirty years of age when he became associated with St. Paul at Troas in or about the year A.D. 50, this would require, on any reasonable computation, that the Acts must have been written not later than A.D. 80-90, when he would be at least from sixty to seventy years old. This is the date, practically, which is accepted by professors Harnack and Ramsay for the composition of the book. Professor Burkitt, it is true, while holding vigorously to its Lukan authorship, considers that it was written a little later than A.D. 90—on the ground that the Acts depends on Josephus for certain historical details. This dependence, however,

is denied by equally competent scholars. We may, however, bear in mind certain other considerations.

(2) **The writer is silent concerning some well-known subjects and events.** This argument from silence cannot be pressed too far, but it is by no means destitute of force. While we use it cautiously, we may yet weigh it in the scales of evidence.

(i) *There is no direct reference in the Acts to St. Paul's Epistles.* Where undesigned coincidences exist, they are rather in the way of broad resemblances than close allusions. The inference would be that the book was written before the Epistles had become widely circulated and generally known, as St. Luke, of course, must have had some acquaintance with their contents. This argument, as far as it goes, suggests that the Acts was written before the closing decade (or last two decades) of the first century, by which time the Pauline Epistles were becoming familiar to the Church.

(ii) *No allusion is made to the heresies which sprang up and prevailed widely before the end of the first century.* True, in St. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus (xx. 29-30) we have recorded the apostle's prediction of approaching trouble; but, at the time, heretical doctrines had not obtruded themselves upon attention, and the tone of the history differs largely in this from what we find in the First Epistle of St. John. This points

so far as the argument goes, to a date prior to the last twenty or twenty-five years of the first century, when such heresies came distinctly into vogue.

- (iii) *No mention is made of the destruction of Jerusalem* which occurred in the year A.D. 70. On the contrary, the narrative seems to shew us the city still standing in its glory. The argument advanced by some that Luke xxi. 20 implies a knowledge on the part of the writer of the siege of Jerusalem and that, in consequence, the Acts, which was confessedly written later than the Gospel, must be dated subsequent to the destruction of the city, is far from being conclusive, for it is a question of the limitations of prophecy. If there is any force at all in the argument from silence it makes for the composition of the Acts before the year A.D. 70.
- (iv) *No hint is given of the martyrdom of St. Paul*, though the writer shews the utmost interest in all that concerns him. This occurred at the latest in the year A.D. 68, and, in the opinion of many scholars, as early as A.D. 65. Of course, St. Luke may have contemplated, as some think, a third and supplementary history; or he may have been interrupted in his literary work by circumstances of which we have no knowledge, and so have closed the Acts abruptly. If he really completed his history, it is strange that he should be silent

as to his hero's death, supposing that death really to have taken place. We arrive, therefore, at the conclusion that the Acts was probably written before A.D. 80-90, and that the argument from silence suggests a date prior to A.D. 70.

As to the place in which the book was written, we have no certain knowledge. Rome, Antioch, Greece, and Asia Minor have all been proposed, but mere conjecture avails nothing. After all, the book is cosmopolitan in character, and it matters little what special locality saw its birth. It is ours to apply its teaching to ourselves, and to continue, in our day and generation, by the power of the same Spirit who energized their life and work, the missionary labours and acts of the apostles.

IV. THE ROMAN WORLD OF APOSTOLIC TIMES

It will help us to realize the nature of the environment in which St. Paul and others carried on their missionary operations, if we look at it, so to speak, through Indian eyes, and try to apprehend its main features by a comparison with conditions and institutions familiar to ourselves.

(1) **The Roman empire.** When Octavius Augustus, the first Roman emperor, died in A.D. 14, he left an empire bounded by the Rhine and Danube on the north, the Euphrates on the east, the African desert on the south, and the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea on the west and north-west. This formed, to all intents

and purposes, the then civilized world, which thus consisted chiefly of countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. This empire was divided, for the most part, into provinces, but included also a number of client States, such as Commagene, Chalcis, and Pontus (Polemon's kingdom). We may liken this, broadly speaking, to the British empire, especially to our own Indian portion of it, comprising, as it does, provinces such as the Panjáb, Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Burmah, and Native States like Rajpatána, Baróda, Mysóre, Hyderabad, and Travancóre.

The government of this empire was vested in the emperor and Senate of Rome, just as the British Ráj is administered by our King-emperor and Parliament. The provinces of the Roman empire were of two kinds, imperial and senatorial, according as their governor was appointed by the emperor or the Senate. In the former case, he was styled prefect or pro-praetor; while, in the latter, he bore the title of pro-consul. As a matter of fact, he was under the control of the emperor in either case. The special provinces which will come before our notice in this history are Syria, Cyprus, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia; as also, though more indirectly, Pamphylia, Lycia, Bithynia with Pontus, Cappadocia, Egypt, Cyrene, and Sicily. Of these, the province of Syria is of peculiar interest, as the first home of the Gospel of Christ. It was the frontier province in the East. It included, during the period under review, in its political administration, (Roman) Cilicia on the west and Judaea in the south (except in A.D. 41-4). These subordinate districts were each

placed under a governor called a procurator, subject to the superior authority of the prefect of Syria. They were related to him somewhat as the governors and lieutenant-governors of India are related to the viceroy. Each of these great officers of state had a number of companions associated with him as councillors and assistants, just as our governors and lieutenant-governors in India are assisted by civilians and others, Indian and European.

(2) **The Roman peace.** For a century and a half after the death of Augustus, the empire enjoyed a period of almost unbroken peace. The strife of nations ceased within her borders, and the traffic in slaves, which had resulted from internecine wars, commensurably decreased. Violent revolutions and civil commotions gave place to settled government and order. The various peoples who formed the subjects of the empire were glad to live quietly under the aegis of a strong and sovereign power. The 'Pax Romana', or 'Roman peace', gave security of life and property and ensured the regular administration of justice. Trade and commerce flourished. Intercourse between the eastern and western portions of the empire became easy and frequent.

It is easy to see in this a picture of the 'Pax Britannica', that régime of peace and tranquillity which prevails under the British flag. With us, too, wars between race and race have given place to ordered rule. A unification of peoples and tribes is taking place such as India has never known before. Moreover, just as the Latin government united the

provinces under their rule and facilitated intercourse and travel by the construction of those famous Roman roads which ran like great arteries across their domains in Europe and Asia, so we enjoy special facilities for travel and intercourse in the shape of that railway system which is, more and more, covering the face of India and uniting the various districts of this vast continent together. The 'Pax Romana', it has been well said, formed 'a momentous respite in the history of the empire, allowing Rome to gather into herself the failing powers of the old world and to foster the nascent powers of the new'. The bearing of this on Indian aspects is sufficiently obvious.

We may add that the 'Roman peace' proved opportune for the first promulgation of the Gospel, and, at the outset, allowed the prosecution of missionary operations. It was only when Christianity proved too formidable a foe to the paganism which lay behind Latin rule, that the signal was sounded for general persecutions. The application of this to missionary work in this land is plain. We have to thank God for a settled government and a rule of peace and equity, under which the Gospel of Christ may be proclaimed without serious let and hindrance.

(3) **The Roman culture.** The language of the Roman people was, of course, Latin, and it was that tongue which chiefly prevailed in the western portion of the empire and which was, almost everywhere, the official language for courts and correspondence. East of the Adriatic, however, in those countries with which the history of the Acts is chiefly concerned, Greek

was really the language of culture and civilization. The conquests of Alexander the Great had spread the knowledge of it far and wide, and the Roman legions found it in at least partial possession and sedulously fostered and advanced it. It was the language of a liberal education and of urbane manners, and no one was considered a really cultured person who could not speak Greek. The result of the adoption of it by the Romans alongside their own political system was that Græco-Roman culture with which we shall constantly meet in the course of the history of the Acts. Of course, the vernaculars of the various races existed alongside, especially among the less educated portions of the population. Thus we find Aramaic largely spoken in Palestine, Coptic in Egypt, Phrygian and Lycaonian in Asia Minor. But the language of western civilization was Greek, and this was spoken by all who made any pretensions to a liberal education. Even the Romans themselves were Græcized to a considerable extent, and a number of Greek-speaking people were to be found in every large city and town of the empire. In fact, the eastern portion of their dominions was divided, as regards the population, into two classes, the Greeks, or Greek-speaking people, and the Barbarians, or non-Greek-speaking classes. The great universities of Athens, Alexandria, and Tarsus exerted a potent influence, in this connexion, far and wide.

The analogy of all this with the condition of things in modern India is not perfect, but is at least striking. We too are living amidst forces introduced into this eastern land by western civilization. In our case, the

language of the government and that of higher education are one and the same. In place of Latin, the official language of the Roman rulers and Greek, which was the medium of scholarship and culture, we have the one language, English, which fulfils both purposes. Alongside the vernaculars of the masses, Hindi, Urdu, Bengáli, Pushtu, Mahráttá, Tamil and so on, we find the Anglo-Saxon tongue spoken by a rapidly increasing multitude throughout the length and breadth of India. And we, also, have our Universities of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Allahabad, from which a flowing stream of English-speaking graduates in arts, philosophy, and science issues forth year by year. As Greek bound together the peoples of the Roman empire, so English is more and more unifying the numerous races and peoples of this great continent. Here, then, is a special opportunity for the missionaries of the cross of Christ to influence the whole of India through the medium of a common language. While, for a long time to come, the masses of the people will require preachers and evangelists possessing a thorough knowledge of the great vernaculars, and can only be approached through them, there is an ever increasing number who most readily pay attention to our message when it is presented to them in what is now regarded as the language of culture and civilization.

(4) **The Roman policy.** What was the attitude of the Roman government to religious things in general, and, in particular, towards the propagation of the Christian faith? At first, it was distinctly tolerant. Rome, of course, was a pagan power, and, in that

respect, differed absolutely from the Christian government which rules India to-day. But she exercised considerable toleration towards the national religions of those races which, one by one, were incorporated into the Latin empire. Within certain limits, she protected her subjects of alien creeds in the observance of their own religions. The Jews and others were allowed to worship according to their conscience. Emperor worship, perhaps, may be called the religion of the state, and this grew more and more popular both in Europe and in Asia. Temples were built, statues erected, festivals held, and incense burned in honour of the Roman Caesar. We have something resembling it in the state religion of Japan. And this cult was practised alongside the worship of the national deities of Rome and Greece and Asia. The Roman authorities were prepared, therefore, to tolerate the new religion until they learned, by experience, that its doctrines were really subversive of the state religion and tended to revolutionize the customs of society. Then their attitude changed to one of bitter persecution. During the period, however, with which we are immediately concerned (A.D. 30-62) the missionaries of Christ, on the whole, found favour with the Roman governors and magistrates who saw nothing in the Gospel to excite their alarm, and were all the more inclined to protect it because it was so violently opposed by the unpopular Jews. St. Paul and his companions moved, largely, on the lines of Græco-Roman civilization. They used the Greek language, and worked, mainly, in the centres of Græco-Roman

influence; Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Pisidian Antioch, Ephesus, etc. As Roman 'citizens', the leaders among them were under the special protection of officers of state, as witness the behaviour to them of Gallio, the Ephesian Asiarchs, and the centurion Julius. In this way, at that particular period, the Roman policy proved decidedly advantageous to missionary operations. We possess, as missionaries, far greater advantages in India to-day.

A few words may be added as to the condition and attitude of the non-official classes with which Christianity was brought into contact in the Roman empire.

- (i) *The higher classes of society* were, on the whole, increasingly irreligious and corrupt in morals. This is abundantly evident from the literature of the age. The picture presented to us in the pages of Cicero, Juvenal, and Tacitus is a standing warning against culture as divorced from true religion. The religions of their forefathers had become, to the upper classes, to a large extent, effete forms. A certain number dabbled in philosophy, but the majority lived for self-indulgence and amusement. Is it not true that there is an increasing number of educated men in India to-day who, while they have lost faith in the old religions of the country, have not sought and found that moral power which alone can enable them to live a holy and unselfish life? To such persons the Gospel has a message of peculiar force.

- (ii) *The middle and lower classes of society*, however, were of a distinctly religious temperament. This has been fully proved by a multitude of inscriptions and papyri discovered and deciphered of recent years. They furnish strong evidence to the fact that the mass of the people were devoted to their gods and priests and temples. They shew also the prevalence of magic, sorcery, and all those adjuncts of heathen systems with which we are so familiar in this land. To such, Christianity brought the message of a true and living God, of a spiritual worship, of a glorious redemption, and of a sure and blessed hope of immortality. It proclaims the same great truths in India to-day.

V. ST. PAUL, THE MISSIONARY

THE narrative of the Acts, as it proceeds, centres increasingly round one attractive personality, that of St. Paul, the missionary. The writer was clearly a devoted friend and enthusiastic admirer of the great apostle. Apart from that, however, we know that St. Paul was God's 'chosen vessel' for carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles (ix. 15), and we may therefore, with justice, regard him as the typical missionary and evangelist.

(1) **His natural advantages.**—Saul of Tarsus possessed special qualifications, from birth and training, for the work which he was destined to perform.

- (i) Born in a strictly Jewish family of the most orthodox type, *he was 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews.'*

The blood of Abraham flowed untainted in his veins. He was a member of the sacred theocratic race. He was heir by birth to all the blessings of God's covenant. Though his family were resident in a Grecian city, they were none the less devoted, on that account, to the religion of their fathers. From early childhood, he was brought up according to the strict traditions of the Pharisees, the most scrupulously religious section of the Jews. When quite a boy he was sent for a thorough Jewish education to Jerusalem, and received the soundest possible theological instruction at the feet of Gamaliel, the most learned of the Rabbis. His proficiency in Hebrew lore and his zeal for the religion of his fathers marked him out from earliest manhood, even among a group of zealots (Gal. i. 14; Acts xxvi. 4-5). To his Jewish birth and training he owed an accurate knowledge of Holy Scripture, a burning zeal for religion, great tenacity of purpose, distinct conceptions of man's sinfulness and God's holiness, a firm faith in divine revelation, a consciousness of the need of atonement, and a stimulating hope, however perverted by material ideas, of Messianic glory and of a resurrection to eternal life. All this gave him a position of peculiar advantage. Only a Jew like Saul could possibly have been the first apostle to the Gentiles.

(ii) To the deep theological instincts of the Jew, he

added *the culture and versatility of the Greek*. He was born and bred in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, just as many patriotic Jews to-day are born and bred in London or Berlin. Though Tarsus had been originally an Oriental town of Asia Minor, it was refounded, so to speak, by the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV, as a Greek city about 170 B.C. It was the custom of the Seleucid monarchs to introduce into their foundations, from motives of policy, Jewish colonists. It is highly probable, therefore, that the family of Saul had originally formed part of such a colony, and that they had been endowed, in the interests of the State, with full rights as citizens of Tarsus (Acts xxi. 39). This would seem to mark them out as highly respectable and of considerable repute in the city of their adoption. In the municipal franchise they possessed a privilege which was confined to a comparatively limited circle. It would identify them, though strict Jews, with the Greek culture, society, and institutions of Tarsus. The local University was one of the three great intellectual centres of the Roman East. It sent out many distinguished professors of Greek philosophy, especially those addicted to the Stoic school. Here, then, we see further formative influences at work in moulding the character of the future missionary. His first years, as also later periods of his early manhood, were spent in a heathen

city. He was familiar with sights and sounds of idolatry which would be grievous and painful to his Jewish heart. At the same time, his sympathies would be broadened by constant contact with people of another race. To some extent, at least, he must have been a student at the University of Tarsus, and have imbibed (as his own quotations shew) a knowledge of the heathen classics. His Jewish exclusiveness was thus modified by Greek friendships and associations. He felt the influence of Gentile culture and grew up amidst the forces of western civilization. A knowledge of the flexible Greek language prepared him, as a missionary, to interpret to the West the Gospel message of the East. An acquaintance with Grecian manners and customs and modes of thought fitted him, in a special way, for work among the Greeks of Macedonia and Achaia, as well as for preaching in the Græcized cities of Asia Minor. Association with men who were noted for their versatility as a nation doubtless helped to develop in him that capacity for adapting himself to circumstances which is so marked a feature of his missionary work.

- (iii) With his Jewish birth and Greek culture, he possessed also the coveted *privilege of being a Roman citizen*. To him pertained not only the municipal franchise of the town of Tarsus, but also the imperial franchise of the Roman empire (Acts. xvi. 37; xxii. 25). Since his

native place did not possess the 'civitas', or right of citizenship, it must have been bestowed upon his family for reasons unknown to us. This gave him an important status, being sufficient of itself to place him amongst the most prominent persons in a provincial town like Tarsus. It also suggests that he must have been, to some extent, on friendly terms with the imperial officials of the vicinity, and this would predispose him to view with favour and admiration the organization and power of the Roman empire. It gave him wide conceptions of unity and catholicity, of order and liberty. It enabled him to appreciate the world-wide mission of the Gospel. It prepared him to be Christ's messenger to prefects and proconsuls, to civil officers and Praetorian soldiers. It fitted him to raise the banner of the Cross aloft in imperial Rome itself. Whilst Saul was his Hebrew name, Paul (Paulus) was his 'cognomen', or surname as a Roman citizen, borne from infancy but brought into special use when he embarked on his imperial mission (xiii. 9, note).

Thus, as has been well said, three civilizations met in the person of Saul of Tarsus. With the Jew's piety and tenacity he united Greek culture and versatility and also Roman strength and catholicity. The best elements of East and West were blended in his character. Moreover, his Hebrew exclusiveness was modified by Greek liberalism and Roman practicality.

May we not learn from such considerations that, for Christ's work in the great continent of India, comprising, as it does, millions of people of divers races, castes, and customs, men are needed who, while they are eastern in birth and thought and feeling, are yet delivered from the trammels of caste and prejudice and from an unreasonable conservatism? Do we not see, again, the desirability, on the part of Christian workers, of taking full advantage of every opportunity for acquiring both mental culture and a sound knowledge of the Holy Scriptures? And does not the example of St. Paul urge us to exercise friendship and kindness towards those who do not see eye-to-eye with us, and to foster a warm spirit of love for all our fellow-subjects, aye! and for all the races of men for whom Christ died?

(2) **His spiritual equipment.**—However great his natural advantages, it was not these, or chiefly these, which made St. Paul a pattern missionary. Neither social status nor mental culture nor political prestige would avail to save a single soul. It needed the spark of God's grace to fall upon the man and set his soul aflame with true zeal and love and power. The story of his conversion and spiritual equipment is quickly told. Saul saw the Lord (Acts xxii. 14; xxvi. 16; 1 Cor. ix. 1); he surrendered himself body, soul and spirit, to the Saviour; and he was filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts ix. 17). Not in fancy or imagination, but in a real and objective sense, he saw Christ Jesus, the ascended Lord. That vision scattered all his unbelief, ended all his opposition; bound him a willing captive to the feet of his Redeemer. Saul's was a sudden, a

complete, a permanent conversion. From the moment of that wonderful interview with Jesus Christ, he lived and laboured only for the glory of his new-found Lord. His union with the Saviour was maintained by constant fellowship, as his after history shews. And the passion of his life was to proclaim to others the grace and glory of Christ his Master. He was a missionary almost from the day of his conversion (Acts ix. 20; Gal. i. 15, 16; 1 Tim. i. 12-16). Moreover, he was filled with the Holy Ghost for a holy life and fruitful service. This only could make him a successful missionary (Acts i. 8).

The story of his life, after his conversion, is virtually a record of the acts of God the Holy Ghost (xiii. 2, 4, 9, 52; xvi. 6-7; xix. 2, 6; xx. 22-3, 28; xxviii. 25). He it was whose life and energy and power pulsed through the man and brought multitudes of souls into the kingdom of our Lord.

Let us beware of putting natural advantages in the place of spiritual equipment. While India needs missionaries, both Indian and European, of mental attainments, intellectual force, and theological ability, she needs still more ambassadors of Christ, men and women who know the Saviour by personal experience, who are filled with His Spirit, and wholly yielded to His service. Eastern sympathies and western activities have their proper place, but the one thing absolutely needful for the evangelization of this land is spiritual life and power.

(3) **His special mission.**—It is difficult for us to realize, at this distance of time and under our

altered circumstances, the special character of St. Paul's great mission. From the moment of his conversion, he was designated as Christ's messenger to the Gentiles (Acts ix. 15 ; xxvi. 16-18 ; Gal. i. 15-16). For this purpose he was converted ; to this end was he called. To a Jew, and even to a Hellenistic Jew like Saul, who had moved freely with Greeks and Romans in his native town, such a call was nothing less than a stupendous revolution. Christ was, in the conception of the Hebrews, the Messiah exclusively of the chosen race. Salvation was, as they viewed it, 'of the Jews' and only for the Jews. Gentiles had no claim on God's grace save by the acceptance, as proselytes, of circumcision and admission to the Jewish body. The very proposition of a covenant including Gentiles on equal terms would sound wicked and preposterous. St. Paul himself regards it as a divine 'secret' (*μυστήριον*), the subject of a new and special revelation (Eph. i. 9-10 ; iii 3-10 ; Col. i. 26-7 ; iv. 3). True, St. Peter was the first to be taught something of God's plan and purpose, and to him it was given to admit Cornelius and his company to the Christian Church (x. 1-48). But he was far from having grasped the fulness of that purpose ; Jewish prejudices continued to cling round him (Gal. ii. 11-13) ; and to the end, his was 'the apostleship of the circumcision'.

Even St. Paul himself, as we gather from the history, only realized the real meaning of the 'secret' slowly and by degrees (xxii. 17-21 ; xvi. 6-7). But, as it dawned more and more clearly on his soul, he was constrained with ever-increasing earnestness to fight

the battle of liberty and catholicity. To him and to his fellow-workers the word 'grace' assumed a new significance. It came to mean that 'surprising mercy' of God which had thrown open the kingdom of heaven to all men, without respect of land and race (xiii. 43, note). We can hardly gauge the extent to which he was misunderstood and opposed, at almost every step, by the more bigoted section of the circumcision party in the Christian Church. His letters shew us something of the grief and poignancy of spirit occasioned him by their unjust aspersions and bitter opposition. His diligence in the collection of alms from Gentile Christians for the relief of their poorer brethren at Jerusalem is evidence of his strong desire to allay all ungenerous suspicions as far as possible (xxiv. 17; 2 Cor. chapters viii. ix). He had not ceased to be a real patriot because of his call to work among the Gentiles, and he loved his own people fervently (Rom. ix. 1-5; x. 1). But he dare not prove unfaithful to his trust; and so he fought, like the hero that he was, for the cause of Gentile liberty. The battle cost him his personal freedom and, at last, his life; but the cause was won. The Christian community, once in danger of being merely a Jewish sect, became the universal Church. All barriers between race and race, class and class, were thrown down completely and for ever. Shall we not lay to heart the meaning of a victory won at so great a cost? Everything which accentuates distinctions between race and race is directly antagonistic to the mind of Christ and to the spirit of the Gospel. It is incumbent on all Christians, and specially at this

crisis in the history of this country, to abstain from everything which makes for strife and to follow all that makes for love and unity. European and Indian alike must lay aside entirely the pride of race and caste and learn to exemplify more truly the perfect brotherhood of all believers. In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither Englishman nor Indian, neither Brahman nor Pariah; but He, our Lord and Saviour, 'is all and in all'. Let us not, therefore, build up again those barriers and divisions which have been destroyed (Gal. ii. 18); but, gladly accepting that unity and catholicity which are the very glory of the Gospel, let us open our hearts as wide as God has opened the gates of His kingdom to all believers.

(4) **His methods of work.**—It is unnecessary to trace in detail here the footsteps of the great apostle. A summary of his labours may be seen at once by glancing down the table of chronology (Introd. VII). It may be instructive, however, to call attention to some of his main lines of work, as we see them laid before us in the Acts of the Apostles; remembering always that he was guided and controlled in all his labours by the wisdom and power of God the Holy Ghost, whose plan of work it really is to which our attention is directed.

- (i) *He occupied strategic points.*—When St. Paul had fairly embarked on his great mission, it will be seen from the history that he followed mainly, if not entirely, the roads and routes of the Roman empire, until the standard of the Gospel was firmly planted in the metropolis

itself. Even in Cyprus, during his first great journey, the chief interest centres round the Roman governor; and from that time forward we have a record of the evangelization of Roman provinces, one by one, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, until we find ourselves in Italy itself. It is clear, therefore, as we look back on the record, that God's great purpose, however gradually it may have been apprehended by His servant, was the evangelization of the Roman empire, which practically corresponded, in those days, with the civilized world. We notice, too, that, with this end in view, the places occupied were chiefly political, intellectual, and commercial centres, Pisidian-Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Rome. Though we have hints in the narrative, here and there, that itinerating work was carried on through districts and zillahs, the chief interest centres in important cities, from which the influence of the Gospel radiated far and wide. It does not follow, of course, that God's way of evangelizing India will be identically the same as that followed in the evangelization of the Roman empire. He 'fulfils Himself in many ways'. The great thing to notice is that St. Paul *entered the doors which the Holy Spirit opened before him* (see especially xvi. 6-10). As a Roman citizen, he would, humanly speaking, find the best ground of vantage in the

larger cities, where Roman influences were most strongly felt. The lesson for ourselves clearly is that we should seek the leadings of the Holy Spirit, and enter the doors which He opens for us, whether in the great cities of India, or in the villages where ninety per cent of the population are to be found.

- (ii) *He adapted himself to his environment.*—This point will be elucidated in the article which follows (Intro. VI). We need only notice here, by way of illustration, how perfectly and naturally he suited his actions and addresses to such widely-different audiences as the Jewish congregations in the synagogues of Pisidian Antioch, Thessalonica, and Ephesus; the pagan crowds at Lystra; the Greek philosophers in the Areopagus of Athens; the courtly assembly in the auditorium of the procurator Festus. He is equally at home, as the messenger of Christ, with Roman governors, Greek professors, Asiatic officials, Jewish theologians. There was nothing stiff or stereotyped about his way of working. In the truest and best sense of the words, he could become 'all things to all men' (1 Cor. ix. 19-23). Is not this freedom from conventional patterns of missionary work sadly lacking in India to-day? Do we not all run too much in stereotyped grooves and tracks? Is not our presentation of the Gospel often weighted with accretions due to western predilections and foreign ideas?

(iii) *He cared tenderly for the newly founded churches.*

We cannot fail to be struck by this feature of his work. Again and again we find him revisiting his beloved converts (xv. 36; xvi. 5; xviii. 23; xx. 1-38); sending delegates to help and cheer them (xviii. 5; xix. 22); continuing in prayer for them; writing letters to them. These facts stand out with far greater prominence in his Epistles. He was not content with having brought men to a knowledge of the truth. His life was bound up with their life. He could only live if they stood fast in the Lord (1 Thes. iii. 8). Christ's ministers need the same spirit in India to-day. While they rebuke false doctrine and inconsistent conduct on the part of converts, as did this first great missionary, with all love and faithfulness, let them learn also to tend with affectionate solicitude the flock of Christ and to identify themselves with those who have learned to name His holy name in this non-Christian land.

(iv) *He associated with himself co-workers.*—Of these, some were Hebrews and therefore Asiatics like himself, as Silas, Aristarchus, and John Mark; others were Greeks, as Luke and Titus; one at least, Timothy, was of mixed extraction. He itinerated with them; worked with them; suffered with them; prayed with them; employed them as his deputies and delegates. We have thus a beautiful picture of a company

of Christian workers, of different origin, nationality, and training, working together as brothers in the unity and harmony of the Gospel. St. Paul shews himself a true Eastern in thus surrounding himself, as the 'Guru' and leader of a new propaganda, with disciples, assistants, and co-workers, whom he trained to preach and spread the doctrines of the Gospel.

Does not the picture suggest to us a loving and united co-partnership in the work of Christ in this land of Indian, Eurasian, and European, constrained by the same divine love, filled with the same Spirit of grace, inspired with the same high and holy purpose?

VI. LESSONS OF THE ACTS FOR THE INDIAN CHURCH

WE have, in the Acts of the Apostles, an inspired history describing the first missionary operations of the Christian Body and dealing with the various problems which confronted them in the prosecution of their work. It is full of typical scenes, events, and occurrences. We may expect, therefore, to find in it clear lines of guidance for the conduct of similar work in India, and to learn from it useful lessons bearing upon our own circumstances and needs. Let us fix attention on the chief of them.

(1) **It emphasizes, first and foremost, the position and work of the Holy Spirit.**—We have, here, not so much a record of 'the Acts of the Apostles'

as an account of 'the Acts of the Holy Ghost'. From beginning to end, He occupies the prominent place and directs and blesses the labours of His servants. The great command of the risen Lord to His disciples was plain and clear: 'He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father' (i. 4). His last words of cheer, as He left them to carry on His work on earth, were sure and true, 'Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses' (i. 5, 8). Then followed Pentecost with its tongues of fire and mighty works. The Master's promise was fulfilled. His disciples were endued with power from on high, and, strong in that pentecostal might, went forth as effectual witnesses 'unto the uttermost part of the earth'. The book is full of the Spirit. We meet His name on almost every page. It confronts us at every turn. Nearly sixty times is the word Spirit (*πνεῦμα*) used in the Acts of the divine Paraclete, and more than forty times He is spoken of as the Holy Spirit. The history narrated is one sustained record of His acts and deeds. As we watch these first disciples busy at their work, we see them

- (i) Baptized with the Holy Ghost (i. 5, 8; ii. 17-18, 33; viii. 15-17; x. 44-7; xi. 15-16; xv. 8; xix. 6);
- (ii) Filled with the Holy Ghost (ii. 4; iv. 8, 31; vi. 3, 5; vii. 55; ix. 17; xi. 24; xiii. 9, 52);
- (iii) Co-witnesses with the Holy Ghost (v. 32);

- (iv) Appointed by the Holy Ghost (xx. 28);
- (v) Separated and sent by the Holy Ghost (xiii. 2, 4);
- (vi) Led by the Holy Ghost (viii. 29, 39; x. 19; xi. 12, 28; xv. 28; xvi. 6-7);
- (vii) Speaking by the Holy Ghost (ii. 4; xxi. 4, 11);

And, even, as we look, we ask ourselves what we know, in true and deep reality, of such experiences. To us, as to those first believers, comes the clear command, 'Tarry ye, until ye be clothed with power from on high' (Luke xxiv. 49). To us, as to that little company at Ephesus, is addressed the solemn question, 'Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed' (xix. 2). Is not the failure in our life and work due to the fact that we do not give the blessed Paraclete His proper place? Would not the operations of the Christian Church, in India and throughout the world, be infinitely more fruitful and effectual if we called a halt and faced, honestly and earnestly, the conditions for receiving our ascended Saviour's great pentecostal gift? And is not His loving voice sounding just as clearly as of yore, 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Eph. v. 18). There is, in the Acts, a vivid and strong realization of His presence, a manifest and victorious sense of His working, which is sadly lacking in the experience of the Church to-day. It is as though the first bright impressions had faded away. But surely it is not the will of God that our lives should be less full of power and joy and fruitfulness than those of the first disciples. As the teaching of this book is true, His purpose for the Church in every age is, still,

that the Holy Ghost should fill and sanctify her members (ii. 4 ; ix. 31 ; xiii. 52), choose and appoint her ministers (ix. 15 ; xiii. 2 ; xx. 28), preside over her counsels (xv. 28), direct and control all her operations (viii. 29 ; x. 19-20 ; xvi. 6-7 ; xx. 22).

One very practical point here suggests itself. Every worker, according to the Acts of the Apostles, should not only be above accusation and reproach (vi. 3 ; xvi. 2), but should be really and truly 'filled with the Holy Ghost' (i. 4-5, 8 ; ii. 4 ; vi. 3 ; ix. 17). No lower standard is either accepted or suggested. Even for the work of 'serving tables', this was regarded as a *sine qua non*, an indispensable necessity. Has there not been, in course of time, a grievous and fatal deviation from this sacred standard? And is there not a crying need to revert to it, as far as possible, in India to-day? As we look round on the company of those engaged in mission work in this great land, is it not all too obvious that lower standards prevail? The fault lies not with this one or with that one only. It is not to be laid exclusively to the door either of the Indian Church or of the foreign missionary body. We are all of us more or less involved in the blame and the reproach. Considerations of expediency and (so-called) necessity have been allowed to over-ride the teaching of the New Testament, and so we are weak, as an aggressive company, where we ought to be strong, and barren where we ought to be fruitful. Only one force can accomplish really spiritual results, the divine power of God the Holy Ghost. Therefore, 'Be filled with the Spirit'.

(2) It glows, in the next place, with God's missionary desires and purposes.—The Acts of the Apostles is a record, pre-eminently, of the propagation of the Gospel. We see, in its narrative, the heart of God yearning over the whole wide family of man. His is a universal Gospel. The last words of the Saviour, as He passed to the right hand of the majesty on high, were missionary words, 'Unto the uttermost part of the earth'. In harmony with this, we find a special proclamation of the Gospel message upon the day of Pentecost to Jews and proselytes gathered in Jerusalem from all quarters of the civilized world. Who shall say how many of these carried back with them the knowledge of salvation to far distant lands? When the apostles and disciples would fain linger worshipping and working in the holy city, God reminds them of His purpose by allowing martyrdom and persecution, and scatters them, perforce, through the regions of Judaea and Samaria to proclaim the Gospel there (viii. 1-4). With what an emphasis of interest the conversion of Cornelius is described, and the opening of the door of salvation to the Gentiles (chapter x). But, here again, holy compulsion had to be brought to bear by God on His too-reluctant messengers. Visions and angels were needed to do their work before even apostles were ready for this fresh advance; and, when it was made, a storm of criticism followed (xi. 1-18). The Church was astonished, not to say perplexed at first, when a further extension received special tokens of divine approval in the preaching of the Gospel to the Greeks of Antioch in

Syria (xi. 19-26): and renewed persecution, with fresh martyrdom, were needed to remind God's people that Jerusalem was not their place of rest (chapter xii). And now the centre of active operations is moved, so to speak, from conservative Jerusalem to more liberal Antioch. There, for the first time, came into vogue that noble name which is world-wide in its application, the distinctive name of Christian (xi. 26). There, too, was found a large element of those who had turned from idols to serve the living God (xi. 20-1), and who would, naturally, be cosmopolitan in their feelings and their sympathies. There, also, were gathered a company of teachers whose exhortations and instructions helped to equip the church of Antioch for the special work which lay before it (xiii. 1). We notice, further, that just as the divine wisdom had prepared a particular congregation to be a missionary church, so also it had been preparing individual evangelists to be foreign missionaries. The previous experience of Barnabas and the conversion and training of St. Paul were obviously ordered in view of the specific work awaiting them. This was the very object with which Christ had met the persecutor by the way (ix. 15-16; xxvi. 16-18); and though he would willingly have laboured in Jerusalem, considering himself to possess special qualifications for the home-ministry, the pressure of the 'pierced hands' compelled him to go 'far hence unto the Gentiles' (xxii. 17-21). The rest of the history in the Acts is, in the main, a record of missionary work in distant lands. St. Paul's first missionary journey breaks up new ground in

the Galatian province of Asia Minor; and, as the result, we see lamps lighted, so to speak, in Pisidian Antioch, in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, to shine for Christ in the heathen darkness round about. We mark here again the sluggishness and reluctance of the Church, as we watch John Mark turn back from the plough to which he had put his hand (xiii. 13; xv. 38), and as we listen to the heated altercations of the party who set more store by their rite of circumcision than the salvation of their fellow men (xv. 1-5). Both Mark and the circumcision zealots have their counterparts in the Christian Church to-day. There are still those who hear the call but 'go not to the work'; and we may still find those who attach more importance to external rites than to the conversion of the heathen.

The purpose of God shines out yet more clearly in the record of the second missionary journey. The missionaries intended, apparently, merely to visit the newly planted congregations and to confirm the faith of the converts. They certainly never contemplated work in Europe. We watch them attempting, again and again, to preach the Word in this district or in that of Asia Minor (xvi. 6-7), God's guiding hand frustrating their intention all the time. In spite of themselves, they are brought at last to Troas, with the blue waters of the Aegean Sea rolling before them, as though waiting to float them across to European soil. The very breakers seemed to say, like the Macedonian in the vision, 'Come over and help us'. And so, once more, God's will triumphed

and His purposes of grace were manifested. The light of the Gospel shone in Macedonia and Greece. Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, and Corinth felt the power of Jesus Christ, and churches were planted there to be witnesses for Him.

The wisdom of God is signally manifested in the narrative of the third missionary journey. He is going, presently, to shift the fulcrum of evangelistic operations to imperial Rome itself. Before doing so, He chooses a new and strong centre in Western Asia. The Roman province known by its rulers distinctively as 'Asia', and comprising Mysia, Lydia, Caria, etc., was, as yet, unoccupied by the witnesses of Christ. Ephesus was, virtually, its capital and a most important city. Here then it seemed good to the divine wisdom to establish a flourishing mission, from which light and truth radiated far and wide (chapter xix). From thence, the apostle's journey was continued into Macedonia and Greece again (xx. 1-3), and there is little doubt that, at this time, he evangelized new districts also, itinerating as far as the Adriatic sea-board (Rom. xv. 19), his face already turned, so to speak, towards Italy. It was undoubtedly during this third missionary journey that his heart and thoughts were definitely fixed on Rome (xix. 21). Thus we see that the Spirit of grace was constantly guiding the thoughts and urging the steps of His messengers to the unevangelized 'regions beyond'. Can we doubt that the confinement in Jerusalem, and the incarceration afterwards, in Roman custody, at Cæsarea were in order to the further

development now contemplated by God's wisdom and love, the occupying of Rome itself by the great apostle as the vantage ground for the prosecution of missionary operations in the West?

As we study the history of the Acts, the scene shifts, if we may so express it, from Jerusalem to Antioch, and, finally, to Rome. It is the consistent record of the evolution of one great purpose, the propagation of the Gospel and the evangelization of the world. We can almost see the hand of God, in pursuance of that purpose, moving the machinery and directing the operations, constraining the reluctant wills of His people as they hang back from the work or loiter by the way, restraining them from taking mistaken routes and following erroneous methods, overruling political events and national changes, controlling even wind and wave and tide, for the fulfilment of His good will and purpose in the salvation of mankind. The candid reader can have no doubt concerning the meaning of God in the foundation and establishment of the Christian Church. Its very *raison d'être*, as viewed in this history, is the evangelization of the world. Its primary work is missionary work. The very divisions of the book emphasize this fact, and follow the lines of the Saviour's last command. His disciples are seen to be witnesses of the Gospel in Jerusalem, in all Judæa and Samaria, and, far beyond, unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Shall we not learn the lesson here in India and Ceylon? The unoccupied fields await us. The will

of God invites us. The love of Christ constrains us. The Spirit of grace directs us. It is ours not to lie down in slothful ease, revelling in the wealth of Christian privilege, but to carry on, in our measure, the Acts of the Apostles, to move forward in the name of Christ, to plant the banner of the Gospel in new regions, to proclaim the glad tidings of great joy to Hindus, Buddhists, and Muhammadans. In view of the solemn fact that out of the three hundred millions of souls in India less than three millions are even nominally Christian, the professed followers of the Saviour representing in some wide districts only two, three, or four to every ten thousand of the population, is there not a cause for vigorous evangelistic action?

(3) **It gives us a vivid picture of the wonderful spontaneity of Christian life and work.**—As we read its pages, we find that organization and constitutional authority have their proper place, and that a most important one. Great respect is shewn all through for the office and position of the apostles, as leaders of the new community (i. 15-26; ii. 14; iv. 37; v. 12; vi. 6; viii. 14-17; ix. 27; xv. 2); with whom, as the work develops, are associated a number of presbyters or elders (xi. 30; xv. 2, 4, 6, 22; xvi. 4; xxi. 18). Provision is made, too, as need arises, for the ordination of assistant-ministers (vi. 2-6); and St. Paul is careful, on his part, to arrange for the welfare and order of the Gentile congregations by the appointment of presbyters or bishops (the terms being then synonymous; xiv. 23; xx. 17, 28). Moreover,

the emergence of James, our Lord's brother, into the position of president of the church of Jerusalem (xii. 17; xv. 13-31; xxi. 18; cf. Gal. ii. 9) is the germ and type of the later episcopate. But we cannot fail to notice that, *while authority is emphasized and revered, it is not regarded as the one thing needful.* After the death of Stephen, the Christians of Jerusalem are 'all scattered abroad except the apostles', and, laymen as they are, 'preach the word' wherever they go, with no other license and commission than that which is born of love to Christ and zeal in His service (viii. 1-4). Philip the Evangelist strikes out new tracks for the Gospel, independent of human authority and direction (viii. 5-13, 26-40), though he afterwards receives apostolic confirmation of his work (viii. 14-24). Hellenistic preachers, unordained so far as our knowledge goes, make an entirely new departure in evangelizing the Greeks of Antioch; and here again official countenance follows the event (xi. 19-24). St. Paul, for his own special mission to the Gentile world, claims a commission direct from heaven, and deprecates the thought of human credentials (ix. 20; Gal. i. 12-22; ii. 6), though he is glad, later, to receive the goodwill and sanction of the authorities at Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 9-10), to submit important questions to them (xv. 2), and to act on their advice (xxi. 20-6). We notice the same independence of action in the case of Apollos (xviii. 24-8).

Again, *Church organization*, in the Acts, *proceeds from life, not life from organization.* It was the rapid progress of the Gospel, due to the active energy of

spiritual life, which necessitated the ordination of the Seven (vi. 1-6). Similarly, it was the continual increase and expansion of the Church, as seen, most probably, in the spread of the Gospel to Caesarea (chapter x) and Antioch (xi. 19-26) which led to the appointment of presbyters at Jerusalem, as assistants to the apostles both in counsel and in labour. And it was the conversion of the heathen in large numbers which occasioned the organization of churches among them (xiv. 21-3). In this connexion, we are struck by the fact that St. Luke omits altogether to mention the ordination of the Jerusalem elders. They suddenly appear in the history as a distinct class (xi. 30; xv. 2, 4, 6) without the slightest explanation. Clearly, he considers the extension of the Gospel and the salvation of the heathen far more important than details of organization. Indeed, the Acts of the Apostles is significantly free from all merely mechanical views of ministry and work. We see, in its history, Christian believers, filled with the Holy Ghost, and inspired by Him, pressing forward in the spontaneous gladness of their faith and love to new regions and fresh endeavours. We watch God's witnesses at work; Stephen labouring with a zeal which cannot be confined in Hebrew channels; Philip breaking up fresh ground and leading an African stranger to the knowledge of the truth; Christian believers, their very names unknown to us, carrying the glad tidings of redemption throughout Judaea and Samaria, as far as to Phoenice, Cyprus, and Antioch (viii. 1; xi. 19-21); Aquila and Priscilla working for their Master while they ply their trade in Corinth

and in Ephesus (xviii. 1-3 ; xviii. 26 ; Rom. xvi. 3, 4) ; Apollos preaching with glowing eloquence in the synagogues of Asia and Achaia (xviii. 24-8) ; new helpers like Gaius and Aristarchus, Tychicus and Trophimus, not to say Luke himself, springing up from place to place as co-workers in the Gospel (xvi. 10 ; xix. 29 ; xx. 4 ; xxvii. 2). It is as though we were looking at an active fountain, with its waters bubbling up continually and flowing forth to cut new channels for themselves on every side and to carry life and verdure far and wide. The phenomenal progress of the Gospel in apostolic times shews that such voluntary and spontaneous work must have been habitual. Vitality, spontaneity, and elasticity were the characteristics of that primitive community. And the abounding energy of their spiritual life triumphed over every obstacle. It broke through age-long traditions, Jewish exclusiveness, idolatrous practices, class observances.

India calls loudly to-day for a reproduction of these features in our life and work. If the land is to be effectually evangelized, we need a complete breaking free from the bonds of caste and from every form of superstitious practices. The law of custom must yield to the law of Christ. The liberty of the Spirit must replace the bondage of the flesh. Organization, again, must not be allowed to take the place of life. Do not missionary operations in this land take too much the form of mechanical machinery ? Spontaneity, originality, elasticity are all too little in evidence. External systems, whether in churches or in missions,

are good and useful in their place, but they are only a reality in so far as they are the expression and the outcome of a growing and expanding life. Our present systems and methods bear too much the impress of foreign conceptions, western methods, rigidity and uniformity. There is a crying need of Indian Pauls, Philips, Stephens; of devout and aggressive Christians like Prisca, Aquila, Apollos. While we must have a number of workers who 'live of the Gospel', what is specially required is an army of volunteer labourers who will witness for their Master while they follow their trades and ply their ordinary avocations, and who, with a glad spontaneity of action, will carry the message of salvation throughout all Madras, Bombay, Central India, Bengal, the United and Frontier Provinces, and the Panjab, not forgetting the important Native States. And, if God raises up Indian Christians to work in new fashions and untrodden paths, let us not dub them 'irregular', or call them too readily 'unauthorized', but let us be thankful for every new departure which is the outcome of true spiritual life. Most men are agreed that India will be best evangelized by her own sons and daughters. Let us hail every sincere effort on their part, and wish it God-speed. After all, life is the great desideratum,—life abundant and overflowing, vigorous and spontaneous, which will impel us to new endeavours, lead us in fresh directions, and throw down in its victorious advance all the dead barriers of caste prejudice and superstitious customs.

(4) **It shews us the wisdom of adaptation to environment in missionary operations.**—We have already noticed (Introd. IV.) that special facilities were afforded the first missionaries by the spread of the Greek language and by the political and commercial arrangements of the Roman Empire; as also that St. Paul made constant use of these facilities, passing along Roman roads, occupying Roman centres, claiming Roman privileges (Introd. V.). These early evangelists teach us the wisdom of utilizing all possible means for the progress of the Gospel. They seek to buy up every opportunity in the prosecution of their work. The temple at Jerusalem (iii. 11; v. 12), the many Jewish synagogues (vi. 8-9; ix. 20; xiii. 14; xiv. 1; xvii. 1-4, 10-12, 17; xviii. 4, xix. 8), the courts of Roman governors (xiii. 7; xxiv. 10-25; xxvi), gatherings of heathen worshippers (xiv. 13-18), assemblies of women for prayer (xvi. 13), prison courtyards (xvi. 31-32), Agorae or market-places (xvii. 17-18), private houses (xviii. 7, 26; xxviii. 30), a Greek philosopher's lecture room (xix. 9), the deck of a ship (xxvii. 23-5)—all serve them as platforms for the proclamation of their message.

We need to exercise the same alertness and readiness to seize occasions and to utilize means in our work in India. The street pial and bazaar, the river bank and bathing ghát, the dharma-sálá and the choultry, great mélas and small gatherings, railway trains and transit-vehicles, public buildings and private houses, the college class-room and the printing press, the English language and the vernaculars of the

country, all these and many other means may be more and more utilized for the spread of Gospel truth in India.

The adaptation to environment shewn by these first missionaries is remarkable. It is seen in their speeches and addresses. St. Peter's discourses to strictly Jewish audiences (chapters ii. iii), full as they are of Bible allusions and Scripture quotations, lay stress on their sin in rejecting the Christ and differ widely from his sermon in the house of Cornelius, in which he sets before an interested but non-Jewish congregation the main facts of the Gospel history. In St. Paul's preaching this versatility is even more conspicuous. In Jewish synagogues, he speaks as a Jew to Jews, using Scripture freely and throwing all his energy into producing in their minds the deep conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is the great Messiah (xiii. 16-41; xvii. 2-3; xviii. 2-5). Face to face with a multitude of superstitious pagans, madly devoted to their temples, priests, and revengeful deities, he at once grasps the situation and preaches to them, as the great underlying truth of all, the message of the true and living God, the Maker of all things, loving His creatures and caring infinitely for their welfare (xiv. 13-18). Brought into the midst of Greek philosophers in the Areopagus at Athens, he reveals his clear understanding of their spiritual attitude, quotes their classics, proclaims that 'unknown God' whom, in their blindness, they were vainly groping after, the Creator, Preserver, and Father of mankind, and ends with a clear note of Jesus and the resurrection and

our accountability for all our actions to an august Judge (xvii. 22-33). The same adaptability to circumstances appears in his various apologies, in which personal testimony is, of course, the prominent note. Put on his defence before an angry Jewish crowd, he at once arrests their attention by speaking in the Hebrew tongue. Arraigned before the Sanhedrin, he acts on the knowledge that it comprises the two opposed parties of the Pharisees and Saducees. Standing before the Roman procurator Felix, he sets forth just those points of fact and law which the judge could readily understand. Pleading his cause in the presence of king Agrippa, a sovereign acquainted with Jewish life and thought, he shews a rare combination of courtly bearing, quiet dignity, and impassioned eloquence.

This adaptation to environment appears also in their conduct and actions. Philip falls in readily with his new surroundings in Samaria and makes a most successful evangelist to that anti-Jewish people. Peter, after God's special revelation, accommodates himself to the circumstances of a Gentile house, eating and associating freely with those whom he had been wont to regard as 'common and unclean'. The Hellenist preachers shew themselves quite at home amidst new conditions at Antioch in Syria, and Barnabas falls into line in the most natural manner possible. As for St. Paul, he is a true Roman citizen as he stands before the proconsul of Cyprus; as he assumes a quiet dignity with the praetors or duumviri of Philippi; as he calmly braves the storm in the court of Gallio, the governor of Achaia; as he associates

with the Asiarchs of Ephesus; as he deals with Claudius Lysias, Festus, and Julius the centurion. He displays Greek sympathies and proclivities in his loving labours among the Gentiles of Pisidian Antioch, Thessalonica, and Corinth; in his bearing towards the philosophers of Athens; in his affectionate co-operation with Luke, Titus, and other Grecian friends. The Greek proselytes and converts seem always to have been specially attached to him, and to have had a warm place in his personal affections. And yet the apostle could be a Hebrew of the Hebrews when dealing with strict Jews, as witness his conduct in circumcising Timothy; in winning marked attention in the synagogue at Ephesus; in purifying himself in the temple; in dividing the counsels of the Sanhedrin; in summoning for conference the leaders of their community in Rome. We see, then, that these first evangelists could divest themselves, to a marked extent, of national prejudices and idiosyncracies in their intercourse with those of other lands and races, and could approach those whose modes of life and thought differed widely from their own in a spirit of cosmopolitan sympathy. At the same time, they did not break off from what was good and useful in the traditions of their own people. The church of Jerusalem clung to the nation, in spite of bitter opposition and persecution. It was patriotic to the core. St. Paul himself continued the good old Hebrew custom of working at a trade (xviii. 3), and was none the less a Jew because of his Christian love for Greeks and Romans (Rom. ix. 1-5).

Does not all this point important lessons which we need to lay to heart in India and Ceylon? Beyond all doubt, our presentation of the Gospel is much too western in form and character. We Europeans and Americans have not learned how to strip ourselves of national habits and predilections to the same extent as many of the preachers of the Apostolic age. We bring to eastern lands our own forms and systems of Church government and practice, many of which are due to our special political, social, and theological history, and are not of the essence of the Gospel. We are apt to forget the simple principle which ruled the decision of the Council of Jerusalem and to 'put a (western) yoke upon the neck of the (eastern) disciples' (xv. 10). We need to be reminded often of that fundamental fact 'He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith' (xv. 9).

Indian Christian brethren also need the same reminder. It requires a real measure of Christian unselfishness for those of different social origin to divest themselves entirely of the spirit and feeling of caste and to love one another fervently; for English-speaking graduates to associate freely with their more ignorant village brethren; and for clergy and other workers to put away the pride of office and position and to shew warm friendship even to the meanest of their flock. And surely the time has come for India's sons to undertake, in a newer and fuller measure, the evangelization of their native land. It is theirs to approach their fellow countrymen in a truly eastern manner and with the sympathy of Jesus Christ. Tact,

versatility, and a capacity to adapt themselves to various conditions will be much in requisition, in this new and more truly Indian propaganda. Let Indian Christians, while they keep in touch with all that is good and useful in the traditions and customs of their country, seek to subordinate everything else to the supreme interests of the Gospel of Christ.

(5) It lays great stress on the universal brotherhood of all believers.—It has been already pointed out that St. Paul fought, at heavy cost, the battle of Gentile liberty and universal Christian brotherhood (Intro. V). The history of the Acts centres largely round this vital struggle. The principle at stake contravened the strongest prejudices and most cherished ideas of the Jewish nation. It was the assertion, in some real measure, of the catholicity of divine grace that roused the storm of persecution against Stephen and led to his violent death (vi. 11-14; vii. 48-50). The news of the evangelization of the semi-heathen city of Samaria awakened the interest, and apparently the anxiety, of the Hebrew Christians (viii. 14). St. Peter, even after Pentecost, was horrified at the idea of deviating from the ceremonial customs of his people and of consorting with 'unclean' Gentiles; and only an express command from God induced him to consent (x. 12-16). A strong party in the church of Jerusalem were stirred to indignation because one of themselves, great apostle though he were, had presumed 'to go in to men uncircumcised and to eat with them' (xi. 3), and it needed the strongest proofs of divine approval to allay the opposition. The tidings

of a new departure among the Greeks of Antioch roused fresh anxiety and caused the sending of Barnabas as a special delegate (xi. 22). St. Paul's bold step in founding churches among purely Gentile peoples led to a far more violent opposition on the part of the Christian 'circumcision party', and a friendly arrangement was effected with considerable difficulty after private interviews and a public council in which Peter and James advocated bravely the cause of catholicity (xv. 1-31; Gal. ii. 1-10). So far, however, was the victory from being really won that Peter himself, and even Barnabas, vitiated their former defence of liberty by yielding to the temptation of observing racial and caste distinctions (Gal. ii. 11-14); and the friction thus produced ended in the separation from Paul of his friend and fellow-worker (xv. 36-39). The Epistles shew that the apostle's steps were dogged by Judaizing teachers, who sought to pervert his converts and to counteract his work (1 Thes. ii. 14-16; 1 Cor. i. 12; ix. 1-5; 2 Cor. xi. 4-7, 13; Gal. i. 6-22; ii. 14-18; iii. 1-3; iv. 8-11, 21; v. 1-9; Phil. i. 15; iii. 1-12; Col. ii. 16-23). His last visit to Jerusalem was clouded by the suspicious attitude and antagonistic spirit of a large party in the Church who were averse to his doctrine of the full and free inclusion of the Gentiles, without distinction, in all the benefits of the Gospel (xxi. 20-25); and this in spite of the peace offering which he brought in the shape of contributions for the poor from the foreign churches. Thus storm after storm of suspicion and opposition broke over him, and he suffered untold pain and sorrow at

the hands of those who called themselves his fellow-Christians, but whose love for caste and custom exceeded their love for the souls of men. Thank God, the struggle ended in a complete vindication of the principle attacked,—the universal brotherhood of all Christians.

This principle is further enshrined in the name applied to the members of the new community. Whilst they are styled *disciples*, in respect of the great Teacher and their profession of following His doctrine (vi. 1-2, 7; ix. 1, 10, 19, 25-6, 36, 38; xi. 26, 29; xiii. 52; xiv. 20, 22, 28; xv. 10; xvi. 1; xviii. 23, 27; xix. 1, 9, 30; xx. 1, 30; xxi. 4, 16); *believers*, as denoting their spiritual relationship to Christ, effected and sustained by faith (ii. 44; iv. 4, 32; v. 14; ix. 42; xiii. 39; xv. 5; xviii. 27; xxi. 20); *saints*, with regard to their call to holiness of life (ix. 13, 32, 41; xxvi. 10); and *Christians*, as those connected with the Christ (xi. 26); the most frequent title of all applied to them is that of *brethren* (i. 15; ix. 30; x. 23; xi. 1, 12, 29; xii. 17; xiv. 2; xv. 1, 3, 22-3, 32-3, 36, 40; xvi. 2, 40; xvii. 6, 10, 14; xviii. 18, 27; xxi. 7, 17; xxviii. 14-15), thus specially emphasizing their fraternal relationship to one another. The Christian Church is, from its very nature, a universal brotherhood, knitting together in one all those who accept the salvation of the Gospel. The Roman Empire, with all its imposing shew of power and organization, failed utterly to unify its subject peoples and to make them one great nation. The universal Church is God's chosen means for promoting

true unity and solidarity among men. This brotherhood, as we view it in the Acts, embraced persons as widely divergent as possible in origin, characteristics, and ideals. It included Pharasaic Jews and philosophic Greeks, Roman soldiers and Samaritan converts, Europeans and Asiatics, men and women, bond and free. We find in it an Ethiopian eunuch, a Greek slave-girl, an Asiatic trader, a Roman jailer, a Eurasian (Timothy), an Athenian magnate, and (apparently) a great proconsul. East and West are thus seen to be drawn and united together in one body in Christ. This, then, is God's ideal and will for us in India. The Christian body is to be one great and united brotherhood, witnessing for Christ in a land where division and disunion have been so rife, and where the strife of races and castes has been so strong and constant. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us is to bind together, in the solidarity of grace and truth, Indian, Eurasian, and European. National prejudices, racial animosities, and caste distinctions are to yield before a higher force. Our gracious Lord chose an out-caste publican as one of His apostles, and laid down the principle which runs through the history of the Acts, 'one is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren'. We Christians, then, have no right to call any man 'common or unclean'. We are distinctly un-Christian when we give room, in any sense, to class pride or caste prejudice. Let us, therefore, draw closer together heart to heart and shoulder to shoulder, and shew to India the greatest

object lesson she has ever seen,—the vital union, in one loving, holy brotherhood, of Eastern and of Western, of Brahman and of Pariah, of Aryan and Dravidian, all contributing something towards the rich comprehensiveness and multiform character of the universal Church.

(6) It inculcates the complete severance of Christianity from idolatry and superstition of every kind.—

- (i) The Roman world of apostolic times teemed with idolatry of every sort and shade. In addition to that elaborate system of mythology with which we have become familiar through the pages of the ancient classics—the worship of Zeus and Apophridite, of Apollo and Minerva, of Pan and Artemis, of Bacchus and Juno, of Mars, Mercury, Neptune, and the thousand and one other deities of the Graeco-Roman pantheon—there were also the numerous gods and goddesses of Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, and other subject lands. The number of these idolatrous cults was legion. And, as facilities for travel and intercourse increased, ‘gods migrated and became blended with the gods of other nations. Foreign cults came from the East and South and mixed with the old (local) forms of worship’. Temples, priests, and festivals were, everywhere, the order of the day. The very ships bore the name and image of pagan deities (xxviii. 11). Dead heroes, nature

objects, and proud emperors claimed and received that honour and worship which are due to God alone.

Face to face with systems such as these, St. Paul and his companions proclaimed their message with no uncertain sound. At Lystra (xiv. 11-18), they besought the priests and people, who would have offered sacrifice to them in their mistaken zeal, to 'turn from these vain things unto the living God'. At Athens, the apostle's 'spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols', and he was constrained to tell the cultured but superstitious Greeks that 'the Lord of heaven and earth dwelleth not in temples made with hands', and to preach to them the good tidings of 'Jesus and the resurrection' (xvii. 16-31). At Ephesus again, an ancient pagan cultus, proud of its world-famed temple and its great Diana, felt so sensibly the impact of the force of Christian truth that it rose in defence of those vested interests which had become seriously imperilled and sought to arrest, by violent means, the progress of the Gospel (xix. 23-41). The attitude of Christ's messengers towards paganism was clear and uncompromising; while they regarded the idolater with love and pity, and sought to win him to a purer faith, they refused to sanction his idolatry in any measure or degree. There could be no communion of light with darkness.

God's sanctuary could have no agreement or fellowship with idols.

The application of this to our own circumstances in India is plain and obvious. We are surrounded by systems and emblems of idolatry on every side. The mere enumeration of India's deities were alike a sad and a formidable task. We need only mention the Védic gods, Agni, Indra, Súra, and Varuna; the Tri-Múrti, Brahmá, Vishnu, Siva; the chief goddesses, Sarasvati, Lakshmi, Káli; secondary deities like Ganésa, Subrahmanaya, Ayanár, and Hanumán; apotheosized heroes like Ráma and Krishna; to say nothing of local and village deities, demon-worship and spirit-worship, linga-worship and ancestor-worship, animal worship and tree worship, river worship and saint worship. We may not, we dare not, compromise with these in anywise. God will not give His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images. It is incumbent, therefore, on the Christian Church of this land to adopt an attitude of complete separation from everything that savours of idolatry and heathenism. The leaven and taint of them threaten to survive among us in caste feeling and certain so-called social customs. Let us cast out the leaven completely in the name of the Lord.

- (ii) Again, Christianity had to do battle, in its progress and expansion, with magic and pseudo-

spiritual cults. St. Luke in our history, invites special attention to such encounters between the true and the false. The first conflict occurred at Samaria, where Simon Magus had erected quite a citadel of occultism by his strange blend of magic and philosophy. That citadel fell before the power of the Gospel, and the apostles stoutly refused the evil which lay entrenched behind it any admission to the Christian Church (viii. 9-24). The next encounter took place in Cyprus, where the false system strove hard, in the person of Elymas the Magian, to arrest the progress of the Gospel. The result was even more decisive, and the judicial blindness which overtook the sorcerer was a symbol of the eclipse of all such cults before the light and truth of Christianity (xiii. 6-12). At Ephesus also the Gospel did battle with the forces of magic and exorcism, and not only were those forces routed, but the church also was purged from the taint and trace of them which still remained (xix. 13-20). Similarly, pagan superstitions were confounded in the isle of Malta (xxviii. 1-10). It was everywhere the same: the messengers of the cross would hold no truce with the powers of magic and of darkness.

Here, then, is the pattern for ourselves in heathen lands like India. Superstition abounds on every side. The lives of millions of our fellow-countrymen are, to

a greater or less extent, under the spell of sorcery and magic. Even educated men believe in astrology and horoscopes, in mubūrtas and lucky days, in mantras and charms, in the mystic powers of yōgis, sannyaśis, and mahātmas. In face of such influences, we need to be on our guard lest the Church of India should compromise with them in any shape or form. The Christian's faith must overcome the world.

(7) **It tells of the keen struggle of Christianity, as the religion of the Spirit, with formal and ceremonial systems, religions of the letter.**—The infant Church of apostolic days was continually pressed by the influence of Judaism, a system which represented, to a large extent, a cold and strict monotheism coupled with a mass of traditions and ceremonial observances, and which was rigorously observed by its Scribes and Rabbis, its Pharisees and Zealots. It was, in some respects, the most exclusive religion the world has ever seen. As we view it in the Acts, it is conspicuous as a religion of the letter, as against the spirit—proud of its fathers, prophets, and written law—glorying in an elaborated code of customs, rites, and ceremonies. We have noted already (Introd. V.) the long and vital struggle which ensued between the dead formalism and exclusiveness of Judaism and the living faith and catholic spirit of the Gospel. There could really be no compromise between the two, and the Christian Church assumed more and more the attitude of complete separation. We have to do, in India to-day, with systems which bear a strong resemblance to

Judaism in respect of their formal and ceremonial character.

- (i) *Bráhmaism* is conspicuous as a religion of ritualism and ceremonialism. Whether we think of its sacrificial code as elaborated in the Bráhmaṇas, or its monistic code as contained in the book of Manu and other Dharmasástras, we are confronted with a network of rules and observances which enter into every detail of the Hindu's religious and social life. The performance of the Bráhmaṇ's morning toilet, his bathing, eating, worshipping, everything he does, is regulated by minute rules and ceremonial customs which forcibly remind us of the later Jews. It is only too patent that the repetition of his prescribed mantras and the fulfilment of his appointed ablutions, pújas, and caste-observances are, for the most part, mechanical and formal. The atmosphere in which he lives and moves and has his being is one of cold and lifeless ritualism.
- (ii) *The creed of Islám*, again, presents us with a parallel, to some extent, with the features of Judaism already mentioned. Like the latter, it glories in the letter of its sacred book, with its elaborate system of interpretation; in its sunnat or rules based on the sayings and actions of Muḥammad, as recorded in traditions handed down from his immediate followers; in its legal ablutions, formal

prayers, and stated fasts and feasts. It resembles Judaism, again, in its insistence on ceremonial observances, in its mechanical view of inspiration and of religious standards and requirements. Its atmosphere is that of a rigid unitarianism, in which the love and fatherhood of God are lost to view. Revolts against the more formal character of Islám have occurred from time to time among its own adherents. Súfism, with its warmer and more mystical teaching, has been well described as 'a reaction from the burden of a rigid law and a wearisome ritual' ¹(Sell); and Babism, with its more liberal view of progressive revelation and its relaxation of many of the stricter rules and ceremonies, is also 'a religious revolt against orthodox Islám' ²in something the same direction. The very existence of such movements is strong evidence of the fact that Muḥammadanism tends to become, to a large extent, a mechanical system rather than a spiritual force.

With such influences around us, we must proclaim fearlessly the love of God our Father in Jesus Christ our Saviour. We must see to it, also, that our own religion, in life and practice, is of the spirit and not merely of the letter. We must beware lest outward rites usurp the place of inward life and spiritual worship. We must watch lest sectarian zeal triumph

¹ *Faith of Islám* (3rd ed.) p. 122. ² *Ibid*, p. 169.

over Christian humility and love. We must hold fast a firm faith in Jesus Christ, not only as the greatest of the prophets but as the divine Saviour from the guilt and power of sin. We must emphasize, by example and by precept, the great principle of our holy religion, 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth'.

(8) It abundantly illustrates the law of increase through suffering.—Each of the three great sections of the book ends with apparent failure and catastrophe. Part I (chapters i-vii) closes with the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution and dispersion of the Christians of Jerusalem. Part II (chapters viii-xii) concludes with the martyrdom of James and the flight of Peter. Part III (chapters xiii-xxviii) leaves the apostle to the Gentiles a captive in Rome, cut off from active itinerating labours. Yet, in each instance we find that the failure was apparent rather than real. It was only a pause in the work, the prelude to a further and more victorious advance. The same principle is in evidence all through the history. When the leading apostles were first cast into prison, the narrative at once proceeds, 'But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about 5,000' (iv. 4). The threatenings of the Sanhedrin were followed by a fresh outpouring of the Spirit and by new progress in the work (iv. 21-33). The forty stripes save one which the twelve received were the signal for a phenomenal increase in the number of believers, 'and a great company of the priests were obedient to the

faith' (v. 40 to vi. 7). The persecution which ensued on Stephen's death led to the evangelization of Judaea and Samaria, as also to new victories in Phoenice, Cyprus, and Antioch (viii. 1, 4-40; xi. 19-26). The conversion of St. Paul is to be traced largely to the same cause. Opposition on the part of the Jews, coupled with active persecution, at Pisidian Antioch (xiii. 45-52), Iconium (xiv. 2-7), Lystra (xiv. 19-21; xvi. 1), Thessalonica (xvii. 2-11), Corinth (xviii. 6-18) and Ephesus (xix. 8-20) led to the further extension of the work in every case, as well as to the foundation of flourishing churches in those cities. Ill-treatment at Philippi resulted in the establishment of one of the apostle's favourite congregations there. The hardships of shipwreck were the occasion of special work in Melita (xxviii. 1-10). Persecution at Jerusalem, incarceration at Caesarea, and captivity at Rome, all turned out to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ. And it was at moments when the battle seemed to be going against him that the Lord appeared to His servant and cheered him with the promise of assured victory (xviii. 9-10; xxiii. 10-11; xxvii. 20-5). Truly, sacred history is 'an excellent cordial for drooping spirits'. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church'.

The lesson speaks to us. Converts in this land know something of human loss and persecution for the Gospel's sake. Evangelists often suffer reproach and sometimes violence in the cause of Christ. To a large extent, indeed, the shield of the British Ráj protects us from actual danger to life and person.

But the law which is seen in operation in the Acts still remains in force—the law of increase through suffering. We need, perhaps, in India, all of us, more willingness to suffer for our Saviour's sake, more readiness to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, more of that holy fortitude which gladly endures insult, ignominy, social ostracism, aye! and even stripes and death that our Master may be glorified.

(9) **It impresses us with a deep sense of the joy of true religion.**—St. Luke, the writer, was a Greek, and the Greeks were a glad and joyous race. Their very salutation spoke of this, Hail! Farewell! Rejoice! (*χαίrete*). It was only natural that he should look for joy in the religion of salvation, and he was not disappointed in his quest. Possibly, it was the bright joyousness of those early Christians which first attracted his attention to the claims of Christ. However that may be, he loves to dwell, all through his history, on this special feature of the Church's character. He tells us that the brotherhood of believers took their 'food with *gladness* and singleness of heart, praising God' (ii. 46). The lame man, healed, is said to have entered the temple '*praising* God' (iii. 8). The apostles, after being beaten in the Sanhedrin, '*departed rejoicing* that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for His Name' (v. 41). Stephen's face, under bitter persecution, is seen to be radiant with holiness and gladness (vi. 15). We are told that, as the result of the reception of the Gospel in Samaria, '*there was much joy in that city*'

(viii. 8); and that, after his baptism, the eunuch saw Philip no more 'for he went on his way *rejoicing*' (viii. 39). When Barnabas, sent to investigate the new departure at Antioch, 'had seen the grace of God, he *was glad*' (xi. 23) with the gladness of a true evangelist. Happiness, again, was produced in the hearts of the Gentiles of Pisidian Antioch by the free offer of salvation (xiii. 48), and, in spite of the enforced departure of their missionaries, the disciples there 'were filled with *joy* and with the Holy Ghost' (v. 52). The true and living God, so St. Paul tells the heathen of Lystra, is a God who fills our hearts 'with *gladness*' (xiv. 17). *Great joy* is caused to believers in Phoenicia and Samaria by the tidings of the conversion of the Gentiles (xv. 3); as also to the Gentile churches by the happy conclusion of the Council of Jerusalem (xv. 31). Even with their feet in the stocks and their wounds still bleeding, Paul and Silas fill their prison at midnight with the glad sound of hymns of praise (xvi. 25); and the great apostle is full of cheerfulness in the face of danger, when the hearts of all besides quail before the storm (xxvii. 22-5). On the way to captivity, and perhaps death, in Rome, he yet 'thanked God and took courage' (xxviii. 15). And so the stream of holy joy flows on throughout the history, unchecked by obstacles and opposition. It is the joy of God's salvation, springing up *within* the heart and not dependent on external circumstances.

We Christians should display, in India, this distinctive feature of sacred and unceasing joy. While Hindus dream wistfully of a gradual escape from sin

and trouble in a long and weary cycle of metempsychosis; while Buddhists take pessimistic views of mundane things and seek their Nirvāna in the dim distant future; and while Muhammadans are sternly fatalistic in their creed; it is ours to shew that Christianity is the religion both of present and eternal happiness.

(10) **It clearly indicates the importance of prayer in Christian life and missionary work.**—Earnest persistence in the prayer of faith was the true prelude to, and preparation for, the blessings of Pentecost (i. 14; ii. 1). Matthias was appointed, and the seven deacons were ordained, after special prayer (i. 24; vi. 6), as were also the presbyters in the newly-founded Gentile churches (xiv. 23). One of the distinctive features of the new community was their 'continuing steadfastly in the prayers' (ii. 42). Threats and opposition only drove them to their knees afresh to spread their needs before the heavenly Master in united prayer (iv. 23-31), with the result that they received a fresh enduement of power and grace. It was in order that the apostles might give themselves to preaching and prayer that assistant ministers were first appointed (vi. 4). It was in the act and attitude of prayer that Stephen, interceding for his murderers and commending his soul to his Redeemer, passed to eternal happiness (vii. 59-60). 'Behold, he prayeth' are the words in which the Lord Himself described the penitent condition of Saul of Tarsus (ix. 11). It was by means of prayer, also, that Peter brought Tabitha to life again (ix. 40); that Cornelius received a divine communication (x. 2, 4);

that the apostle of the circumcision saw the revelation which prepared him to carry the message of the Gospel to Gentile hearers (x. 9). Prayer, under God, opened Peter's prison doors (xii. 12), and shook the very foundations of the jail at Philippi (xvi. 25). It was after a season of solemn prayer that the missionaries to the Gentiles were sent forth on their momentous errand (xiii. 3); and it was at a 'place of prayer' that Lydia heard and received the message of salvation (xvi. 13, 16). Two of the most tender scenes in the whole history are those in which Paul the apostle, on his way to persecution and captivity, kneeled down in prayer with the elders at Miletus and with dear Christian friends on the sea-shore at Tyre (xx. 36-8; xxi. 5). St. Paul himself, again, has told us that it was when he was engaged in prayer that he was led to realize more fully the Master's call to work among the heathen (xxii. 17-21). We watch him, to the end of the story, praying on board the endangered ship (xxvii. 23-5) and by the sick-bed of Publius' father in the isle of Malta (xxviii. 8). Thus we see that the Christians of the Acts breathed the atmosphere of prayer; believed in the power of prayer; began, continued, and ended all their work with prayer.

We shall do well to follow in their steps. In view of the needs of India, one of our chiefest duties is to continue instantly in prayer. We have to do with many evils of which the words are true, 'this kind goeth not out but by prayer'. Herein lies the secret of a holy life and the pathway of missionary success. 'We kneel how weak; we rise how full of power'. In

these days of multiplied business and multiform activities, it is more than ever imperative that our life should be one of quiet fellowship with God, and that our work should be done in the power of God the Holy Ghost.

VII. CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

It is a matter of the utmost difficulty to assign dates to the various events recorded in the Acts with anything like an assurance of strict accuracy, for the simple reason that we lack definite starting-points for our calculations.

(1) If we could fix absolutely the date of Festus's assumption of office at Cæsarea (xxiv. 27), we should be able to draw up a fairly accurate chronological table, so far as the main events narrated in chapters xvi-xxviii are concerned. Unfortunately, however, there is a conflict of evidence as to the year in which he commenced his term of office, and we can only determine it approximately, within certain limits. According to the chronology usually adopted (following Bishop Lightfoot), this crucial event is dated A.D. 60, and this gives us A.D. 61-3 as the two years of St. Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. There is good reason, however, for thinking this to be too late, and so many scholars to-day adopt A.D. 59 or even A.D. 58 as the year of Festus's arrival in Cæsarea. Professor Harnack would fix it earlier still.

(2) For the earlier portion of the history, we may be practically certain that A.D. 44 is the date of the death of Agrippa I, and that A.D. 46 is the year

when the famine occurred which is mentioned in Acts xi. 28-9. These data enable us to fix approximately certain other events, with the help of notices found in St. Paul's Epistles.

(3) The following table is based mainly—for the events commencing with the Jerusalem famine on to the apostle's first imprisonment in Rome—on Sir W. M. Ramsay's careful calculations, though it differs from him in a few points.

TABLE.

<i>Event.</i>	<i>Date A.D.</i>
Our Lord's ascension ...	} 30
Day of Pentecost ...	
Martyrdom of Stephen ...	} 36
Philip in Samaria ...	
Conversion of Paul ...	
Paul in Arabia and Damascus ...	36-8.
Paul in Jerusalem (first visit)...	} 38
Departure to Tarsus ...	
Paul's work in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21) ...	} 38-43.
Peter at Lydda, Joppa, & Cæsarea	
Conversion of Cornelius ...	
Hellenists preaching at Antioch and Barnabas' work there ...	
Paul at Antioch with Barnabas ...	43 or 44.
Martyrdom of James ...	} 44
Death of Herod Agrippa I ...	
Paul at Jerusalem (second visit) with Barnabas, carrying alms from Antioch ...	} 46
...	

TABLE—(continued.)

<i>Event.</i>	<i>Date A.D.</i>
Paul returns to Antioch with Barnabas ... } ... } ... }	47 (early).
<i>First Missionary Journey</i> ... } Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, } Lystra, Derbe. Return to An- } tioch, via Perga ... }	47 (spring) to 49 (summer).
Paul at Jerusalem (third visit) with } Barnabas ... }	50 (early).
Council at Jerusalem ... }	
Return to Antioch. Separation } from Barnabas ... }	50 (spring).
<i>Second Missionary Journey</i> ... }	50 (summer) to 53 (early).
Paul and Silas in Syria, Cilicia, } and Asia Minor. Timothy. } Troas. Arrival of Luke ... }	50-51
Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, } Athens ... }	
At Corinth. Writes 1 Thessaloni- } ans. Writes 2 Thessalonians ... }	51 (Sept. ?) to 53 (early).
Return to Palestine, via Ephesus. } Paul at Jerusalem (fourth visit) } short ... }	53 (early).
<i>Third Missionary Journey</i> ... }	53 (spring) to 57 (May).
Work in Galatia-Phrygia ... }	53 (summer).
Work in Ephesus ... } Writes 1 Corinthians (end of stay) }	53 (autumn) to 56 (early).

TABLE—(continued.)

<i>Event.</i>	<i>Date A.D.</i>
Work in Macedonia ...	56 (summer and autumn).
Writes 2 Corinthians ...	
Writes Galatians (?) ...	
Work in Corinth ...	56 (December) to 57 February.
Writes Romans ...	
Travels via Philippi ...	57 (April).
Return to Jerusalem, via Troas, Miletus, Tyre, and Cæsarea...	57 (April-May).
Paul at Jerusalem (fifth visit). Arrest in temple. Speeches to people and Sanhedrin ...	
Sent to Cæsarea by Claudius Lysias ...	57 (May).
Paul at Cæsarea, a prisoner. Felix, Festus. Herod Agrippa II.	
<i>Paul's voyage to Rome</i> ...	57 (summer) to 59 (summer).
Shipwrecked at Malta ...	59 (late summer). 59 (November) to 60 (February).
Arrival in Rome, via Puteoli ...	60 (spring).
<i>Paul's first Roman imprisonment.</i> Writes Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians ...	60 (spring) to 62.
Release from captivity ...	
<i>Paul's last labours in Spain (?)</i> , Crete, Greece, and Asia Minor.	62 (spring). 62 to 65.
Writes 1 Timothy. Writes Titus.	
<i>Paul's second Roman imprisonment</i> Writes 2 Timothy ...	65 to 67.
Paul's martyrdom ...	

Notes.

1. If the 'fourteen years' of Gal. ii. 1 do not include the 'three years' of Gal. i. 18, the date of St. Paul's conversion must be thrown back to A.D. 34 or 33.

2. The dates usually cited for certain main events are:—

Paul in Corinth ...	... 52-4.
Third missionary journey ...	... 54-8.
Paul in Ephesus ...	... 54-7.
1 Corinthians ...	... 57 (spring).
2 Corinthians ...	... 57 (autumn).
Galatians ...	... 57 (late).
Rom. 18 ...	... 58 (early).
Arrest in Jerusalem ...	... 58.
Imprisonment in Cæsarea ...	... 58-60.
First Roman imprisonment ...	... 61 (spring) to 63 (spring).

3. Many scholars consider that the Epistle to the Galatians was written during the stay in Ephesus. Ramsay dates it from Antioch, A.D. 53, on the eve of the third missionary journey.

4. Eusebius assigns St. Paul's martyrdom to the end of Nero's reign which closed in A.D. 68. This would suggest A.D. 67 as the year of the martyrdom. Since, however, the violence of the Neronian persecution was at its height in A.D. 65, after the great fire of Rome in A.D. 64, many scholars consider that to be the most probable date of the apostle's death.

VIII. ANALYSIS OF THE ACTS.

Some commentators, having regard to the principal actors in the scenes described, have divided the history into two main parts:—

1. The acts of Peter ... Chapters 1—12
2. The acts of Paul ... Chapters 13—28

The more correct and natural division of the book, however, is that suggested by our Lord's own words in chapter i. 8, marking out, as it does, the progressive stages of the work of the apostles and their coadjutors. It is also the division which the writer himself, clearly, adopts. Following the lines of division thus indicated for us, we may analyse the contents of the Acts in various ways. Two different analyses are here suggested, the one for classroom purposes, the other for more devotional study and general use.

ANALYSIS I.

	Chapter
i. 'Acts' in Jerusalem Chapters	i.—vii.
Introduction. The great forty days.	'
The ascension ...	i. 1—11.
The eve of Pentecost. Peter's speech. Election of Matthias...	i. 12—26.
The day of Pentecost. Peter's speech	ii. 1—40.
The first converts and their fellow- ship ...	ii. 41—7.
The lame man healed. Peter's speech in Solomon's porch ...	iii.
Peter and John before the Sanhe- drin. Peter's speech ...	iv. 1—22.

	Chapter
The prayer meeting and its results	iv. 23—31.
The Christian community. Barnabas. Ananias and Sapphira ...	iv. 32 to v. 16.
The apostles in prison. Miraculous release. Before the Sanhedrin.	
Peter's speech. Gamaliel ...	v. 17—42.
The seven deacons. Stephen preaching	vi.
Stephen's speech and martyrdom...	vii.
2. 'Acts' in Judaea and Samaria, Chapters viii-xii.	
Persecution. Witnesses scattered	viii. 1—4.
Philip in Samaria. Simon Magus	viii. 5—25.
Philip and the eunuch ...	viii. 26—40.
Saul's conversion and first labours	ix. 1—31.
Peter at Lydda and Joppa ...	ix. 32—43.
Conversion of Cornelius. Peter's speech	x.
Criticisms by circumcision party.	
Peter's speech	xi. 1—18.
Spread of the Gospel to Antioch.	
Barnabas, Paul, and Agabus ...	xi. 19—30.
Herod's persecution. Martyrdom of James. Escape of Peter ...	xii. 1—19.
Herod's death. Progress of the Church	xii. 20—5.
3. 'Acts' in other lands. Chapters xiii—xxviii.	
<i>First missionary journey.</i>	
Paul and Barnabas sent forth from Antioch	xiii. 1—4.
Cyprus. Sergius Paulus and Elymas	xiii. 5—12.

	Chapter
Pisidian Antioch. Paul's speech...	xiii. 13—52.
Iconium	xiv. 1—6.
Lystra. Cripple healed. Paul's speech	xiv. 7—19.
Derbe	xiv. 20, 21.
Return to Syrian Antioch ...	xiv. 22—8.
Council in Jerusalem. Speeches of Peter and James	xv. 1—21.
Conciliar letter to Gentile churches. Judas and Silas	xv. 22—34.
Disagreement between Paul and Barnabas	xv. 35—9.
<i>Second missionary journey.</i>	
Churches revisited. Silas and Timo- thy	xv. 40 to xvi. 5
Journey to Troas. Vision. ...	xvi. 6—10.
Philippi. Lydia, the soothsayer, and the jailer	xvi. 11—40.
Thessalonica. Jason's house as- saulted	xvii. 1—9.
Berœa	xvii. 10—14.
Athens. Paul's speech at the Areopagas	xvii. 15—34.
Corinth. Aquila and Priscilla. Gallo	xviii. 1—18.
Return via Ephesus to Antioch ...	xviii. 19—22.
<i>Third missionary journey.</i>	
Tour in the Galatia and Phrygian regions	xviii. 23.
Apollos at Ephesus and Corinth ...	xviii. 24—8.

	Chapter
Ephesus. Paul's three years' stay.	
Demetrius and disturbance in theatre	xix.
Tour in Macedonia and Greece ...	xx. 1—6.
Sunday at Troas. Eutychus ...	xx. 7—12.
To Miletus. Paul's speech to Ephesian elders	xx. 13—38.
Journey to Jerusalem via Tyre and Caesarea	xxi. 1—17.
<i>Concluding Acts.</i>	
In Jerusalem. Paul in the temple.	
His arrest ...	xxi. 18—40.
" " Paul's speech to the Jews ...	xxii. 1—21.
" " Paul and Lysias... ..	xxii. 22—30.
" " Paul before the Sanhedrin ...	xxiii. 1—11.
" " The plot. Paul sent to Caesarea ...	xxiii. 12—35.
In Caesarea. Paul and Felix.	
Speeches of Tertullian and Paul ...	xxiv.
" " Paul and Felix.	
Appeal to Caesar. ...	xxv.
" " Paul and Agrippa.	
Paul's speech ...	xxvi.
Journey to Rome. Paul's voyage and shipwreck ...	xxvii.
" " Paul at Malta.	
Publius ...	xxviii. 1—10.

Chapter

- Journey to Rome. Syracuse, Puteoli,
 Appii forum ... xxviii. 11—15.
 Paul in Rome. Speech to the Jews.
 Two years' work ... xxviii. 16—31.

ANALYSIS II.

1. Witnesses in Jerusalem. Chapters i—vii.

- Ch. i. The first preparations... The witnesses prepared.
 „ ii. The first ingathering ... The witnesses anointed.
 „ iii. The first miracle
 (specific) ... The witnesses accredited
 „ iv. The first conflict ... The witnesses imprison-
 ed.
 „ v. The first stripes ... The witnesses beaten.
 „ vi. The first deacons ... The witnesses multiplied
 „ vii. The first martyr ... The witnesses persecut-
 ed.

2. Witnesses in all Judaea and Samaria, Chapters viii—xii.

- Ch. viii. A new advance ... Samaria.
 „ ix. A new apostle ... Paul.
 „ x. A new departure ... Cornelius the Gentile.
 „ xi. A new centre ... Antioch of Syria.
 „ xii. A new struggle ... Herod.

3. Witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth. Chapters xiii—xxviii.

(1) *St. Paul's first missionary journey.*

- Chapters. xii—xv. ... (S. E. Asia Minor).
 Ch. xiii. The missionary call ... From Antioch to Cyprus
 and Pisidian Antioch.

- Ch. xiv. The missionary circuit Pisidian Antioch to Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and home again.
- „ xv. The missionary conference ... In Jerusalem.
- (2) *St. Paul's second missionary journey.*
- Chapters xvi—xviii. ... (Eastern Europe).
- Ch. xvi. Three typical converts. At Philippi. Lydia, soothsayer, jailer.
- „ xvii. Three typical cities ... Thessalonica (opposition); Beroea (interest); Athens (indifference).
- „ xviii. Three typical experiences ... At Corinth. Discouragement, encouragement, disparagement.
- (3) *St. Paul's third missionary journey.*
- Chapters xix.—xxi. ... (Roman Asia).
- Ch. xix. A missionary centre ... Ephesus.
- „ xx. A missionary charge ... At Miletus.
- „ xxi. A missionary crisis ... In Jerusalem.
- (4) *St. Paul's fourth missionary journey.*
- Chapters xxii.—xxviii. ... (Via Caesarea to Rome.)
- Ch. xxii. Witnessing to the people.
- „ xxiii. Witnessing before the Council.
- „ xxiv. xxv. Witnessing before governors ... Felix, Festus.
- „ xxvi. Witnessing before kings. Agrippa.

Ch. xxvii. Witnessing on board ship.

„ xxviii. Witnessing in the city ... Rome.

Note.—The missionary journeys slightly overlap in the chapters

Journey I is really from xiii. 1—xv. 35.

Journey II „ „ xv. 36—xviii. 22.

Journey III „ „ xviii. 23—xxi. 16.

But it is convenient, for purposes of memorizing, to divide the history as in Analysis II, which gives three chapters to each of the three journeys, and the overlapping is so slight as scarcely to affect the plan. There seems no reason, either, why St. Paul's going as a prisoner from Jerusalem to Rome, via Caesarea, should not be represented as a fourth journey, as suggested in this Analysis. This gives us seven chapters to his last journey, just as the preceding itineraries had three chapters each.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

THE ¹ former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both 1 Gr. *first*. 1

TITLE

The title 'Acts of the Apostles', though it was probably not appended to the treatise by the author himself, is certainly very ancient. It is found in the *Muratorian Fragment* on the Canon (late second century), and is used by Clement of Alexandria and other early Fathers. In the Vatican Manuscript (B), as also in Codex Bezae (D), it is styled 'Acts of Apostles', without the definite article; while in the Sinaitic Manuscript (S) the title stands simply 'Acts'. Whatever its original form may have been, the present title is undoubtedly appropriate to a historical book which records the first evangelistic operations of Christ's apostles and their fellow-workers after the day of Pentecost. We note, with special interest, that the book which describes the first propagation of the Gospel in the world at large is a record of *acts* and *deeds*, not a compendium of theories and philosophies (cf. i. 1, note). Christianity is the great historical religion, and its object and operations are essentially *practical*. Its *acts* are still being continued in the moral and spiritual regeneration of mankind, in deeds of mercy and philanthropy, in special care for the welfare of the sick and poor and outcast.

Part 1. Acts in Jerusalem.—Chapters 1—7

CHAPTER I

1—11. INTRODUCTION. THE GREAT FORTY DAYS. THE ASCENSION

1. The former treatise] 'Literally the first treatise'; but Greek idiom justifies the translation of the text as 'the first

2 to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received
^{2 Or, Holy Spirit.} up, after that he had given commandment
 through the ²Holy Ghost unto the apostles

of two', i.e., 'the former'. Cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 30; Matt. xxvii. 64; John i. 15. 30. Some, however, are of opinion that St. Luke intended to write a third and later history, and so designedly employed the word 'first' in the superlative degree.

Treatise] (λόγος). Better, 'narrative'. The same word is employed by the Greek historian Xenophon to designate the narrative-contents of the first book of his famous *Anabasis*. It means a historical record rather than an elaborate treatise. The 'former treatise' in question is undoubtedly St. Luke's Gospel (Introd: I. 1).

Theophilus] Cf. Luke i. 3. Since this name means 'beloved by God' or 'the friend of God', it has been supposed by some to denote an ideal person, or to be a general name applicable to any Christian reader. We may be sure, however, that a real person is addressed, bearing the proper name of Theophilus. We know nothing certain of the individual in question, but, since he is styled in St. Luke's Gospel 'most excellent' (κράτιστος), an epithet applied in the Acts to Felix and Festus (xxiii. 26; xxiv. 3; xxvi. 25), there is some reason for thinking that he must have been a person of rank, probably a Roman official of some standing.

From the frequent explanations of places and customs which occur in the two narratives addressed to him, it would appear that he was a Gentile convert, residing elsewhere than in Palestine. We may reasonably suppose also that he must have been a man of culture, in view of the fact that St. Luke wrote, largely for his information, two such books as the Gospel and the Acts. The fact that both treatises were addressed to him is a strong argument for the identity of their authorship.

Began] This is a favourite word with St. Luke, occurring thirty-one times in his Gospel and ten times in the Acts. It is thus a little token of his authorship. The Gospel is here spoken of as a book of 'beginnings' only, setting forth the first

whom he had chosen : to whom he also ³ shewed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, ^{8 Gr. presented.} appearing unto them by the space of forty ³

promulgation of the evangelical message by our Lord. It does not contain an exhaustive account of His sayings and doings, but only those facts which relate to the foundation of His kingdom. Just so, the Acts is a narrative of what his disciples, moved by the Holy Ghost, 'began to do and to teach'. Christ 'began to do and to teach', and then the 'other Paraclete' came to carry on His work. While the Gospel contains an epitome of the Saviour's work on earth, the Acts contains an epitome of His work from heaven. Thus the two books correspond, and are complementary to one another.

To do and to teach] Notice the order, first the life and then the lip, deeds before words. It was said of the Pharisees of later Judaism 'they say and do not' (Matt. xxiii. 3), and India has seen many Gurus who have similarly failed. Christ is the only teacher who has perfectly exemplified His own doctrine. He first *did* and then *said*, and His acts and deeds often spoke louder than His words. Let us learn that conduct and practice must precede teaching and preaching. Cf. Luke xxiv. 19.

2. Until the day in which He was received up] The Acts thus takes up the narrative where the Gospel left it (Luke xxiv. 50-53). St. Matthew and St. John do not record the ascension, and St. Mark (supposing the last verses of his Gospel authentic) has only the briefest notice of it. 'The day in which He was received up' marked the close of our Lord's work on earth. How that work was carried on afterwards by His people, energized by the Holy Spirit, is the subject treated of in the Acts of the Apostles.

After that He had given commandment] Some refer this to His command to preach the Gospel throughout the world¹ (Mark xvi. 15; Luke xxiv. 47), with the accompanying injunction to

¹ So the Bezan or Western text, which is based on the Codex Bezae (D) an ancient MS. in the Cambridge University Library.

days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of
 4 ^{4 Or, eating} God: and, 'being assembled together with
^{with them.} them, he charged them not to depart from

baptize and instruct all converts (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20); others to the command to wait for the enduement of the Holy Ghost (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4). The expression itself is a general one, and may include both these and also other commandments of our Lord.

Through the Holy Ghost] All Christ's work on earth was done 'through the Holy Ghost'. It was through the divine Spirit that His mighty deeds were wrought (Matt. xii. 28), that His gracious words were spoken (Luke iv. 18), and that His redemptive work was accomplished (Heb. ix. 14). By the same Spirit, He is seen here teaching and enjoining His disciples. If Christ, as man, found it needful to depend upon the Holy Ghost in all He said and did, how much more do we need the anointing and enabling of the Paraclete.

The apostles whom He had chosen] The title 'apostles' (sent ones) is used here not only as indicating their official position but also as being appropriate to the special mission on which He was about to send them. They were going to be 'sent' on a world-wide embassy. The name 'apostle' corresponds closely in meaning with our word missionary. Christ had chosen these men to be His missionaries. The word 'chosen' means 'chosen out for Himself'. The same word is used of selecting Christian workers in Luke vi. 13; John vi. 70; xiii. 18; xv. 16, 19; Acts i. 24; vi. 5; xv. 7, 22, 25; 1 Cor. i. 27-8. We should notice with what prayer and care Christ chose His servants. The selection was preceded by a whole night of prayer (Luke vi. 12-13). There is no justification in the New Testament for appointing unspiritual and unsanctified persons as workers in God's vineyard, and the Indian Church will do well to follow carefully, in this, the lines laid down in the Gospels and the Acts.

3. Shewed Himself alive] Literally 'presented Himself alive' (margin). An almost identical expression is employed in ix. 41

Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, *said he*, ye heard from me: for John indeed

of Peter's showing Dorcas to her friends after her miraculous recovery; 'he presented her alive'.

It was the vision of the risen Lord which altered the whole perspective of the outlook of His disciples and determined the future of their life and work. The emphasis placed on the resurrection throughout this book is marked. It was that great fact which inspired and stimulated the labours of those early Christians and led to the reorganization of their society and plans. Nothing except that will satisfactorily account for the existence of the Christian Church. See, also, note on v. 22. ,

After His passion] Literally 'after He had suffered'. His death upon the cross is, of course, included in those sufferings. We see, therefore, that His vicarious sacrifice, here, as elsewhere throughout the New Testament, lies at the root of all Christian faith and service. It was necessary to our salvation 'that the Christ should suffer and rise from the dead the third day' (Luke xxiv. 46). His great atonement and His glorious resurrection are the two key-stones of the Christian system.

By many proofs] The word 'proof' is an unusual one, occurring nowhere else in the New Testament. It denotes 'a sure sign or token', 'a positive proof manifest to the senses'. Christ gave to His disciples such manifest proofs of His resurrection by look, tone, gesture, act, as to leave no room for uncertainty. He spoke with them, ate with them, walked with them, shewed them the scars in His hands and His side. They had convincing evidence by sight, touch, and hearing. The resurrection was placed for ever beyond the reach of reasonable doubt, and necessarily so, for if Christ be not raised our faith and hope are vain (1 Cor. xv. 17).

Appearing unto them] This verb, found only here in the New Testament, means 'to be seen by the eye'. The cognate noun occurs in Luke i. 22; xxiv. 23; Acts xxvi. 19; 2. Cor. xii. 1, always of heavenly appearances. The disciples saw their risen Saviour with their own eyes. They were thus eye-witnesses to the fact that He had risen again. And it was no passing glance which

baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized
⁵Or, in. ⁵with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked

they had of Him, leaving room for the suspicion of optical illusion, for they saw Him again and again, as the Greek word implies, during the space of forty days.

By the space of forty days] This is the only passage in which the duration of time between our Lord's resurrection and ascension is definitely specified. Attempts have been made to shew a discrepancy between this verse and the narrative in St. Luke's Gospel, but a careful comparison will convince us that there is no real contradiction between the two. The events which occurred on the way to Emmaus on the evening of the resurrection day (Luke xxiv. 13-35) are followed by an account of what transpired eight days later (vv. 36-43; cf. John xx. 26-28), and this again by narratives of what took place on two subsequent occasions (vv. 44-49; vv. 50-53). All this would require the lapse of time, and we know that a sojourn in Galilee and a return from thence to Jerusalem have also to be included (Matt. xxviii. 10-20; John xxi.; 1 Cor. xv. 6, 7). Forty days would not more than suffice for all these.

It is interesting to notice that, under the Mosaic dispensation, fifty days elapsed between the bringing of the sheaf of the wave offering, of which our Saviour's resurrection was the anti-type, and the Feast of Pentecost (Lev. xxiii. 15-21). If we add to the forty days of our Lord's post-resurrection life on earth the ten days during which His people waited for the Holy Ghost after His ascension, we arrive exactly at the fifty days which, according to the type, were to elapse between His resurrection and the day of Pentecost.

Speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God] Many conjectures have been hazarded, and even bold assertions made, as to the nature of Christ's communications to His disciples during the forty days. Some, for example, have assumed that He gave, at this season, special instructions as to church organization and worship; but such assumptions are baseless, and we may be quite sure that our Lord gave no special teaching about

him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father

church organization or anything else which is not fully supported by other Scriptures. We know, however, the nature of some at least of His communications. He opened the Scriptures to His disciples (Luke xxiv. 45-47), and charged them to preach 'repentance and remission of sins among all nations'. He gave them a special commission as His missionary servants (John xx. 21-23). He assured them of His authority and spiritual presence with them, and enjoined them to baptize and instruct converts to the faith (Matt. xxviii. 18-20). He bade them wait for the anointing of the Holy Ghost (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4, 8). He promised, if we may accept the passage as authentic, that signs and miracles should attest the truth of their message (Mark xvi. 17, 18).

We must be on our guard against the attempts of men to fill in what they are pleased to call Christ's 'unrecorded teaching'. It is only 'recorded teaching' which has the force and authority of revelation, and we know nothing of any other.

4. Being assembled together with them] This verb occurs only in this one verse. It is derived from a root meaning 'gathered together in a compact company', and speaks of the close union and communion of the risen Lord and His disciples.

The marginal rendering follows the Latin version, Chrysostom, and others in deriving the word from the root 'salt' and understanding it of 'eating salt together', and so, generally, of 'taking food together'. Cf. x. 41, and refer, by way of illustration, to Luke xxiv. 41, 42; John xxi. 10-14. It would seem that stress is laid on their eating together as one of those 'convincing proofs' which attested the reality of the resurrection.

He charged them] This verb occurs three times in the Acts, and so expresses the ascending Saviour's three-fold 'charge' to His people.

- (a) He charges us to repent of sin (xvii. 30), so continuing the first message of the preceding Gospels.
- (b) He charges us to wait for the Spirit (i. 4).
- (c) He charges us to preach the Gospel (x. 42).

8 hath ¹ set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in 1 Or, a p. pointed by.

Not to depart from Jerusalem] The command of Luke xxiv. 49 is thus reiterated, shewing another link of close connexion between the two books. Jerusalem, the scene of their Master's death, was also to be the scene of His power and victory at Pentecost. It was fitting, too, that the word of the truth of the Gospel should go forth from the 'holy city' into all lands (Is. ii. 3; Mic. iv. 1, 2). Moreover, they were not equipped for Christian service until baptized with the Holy Ghost, and so must continue in headquarters till clothed with power from on high.

The promise of the Father] The phrase is repeated from Luke xxiv. 49, and is peculiar to these two passages. The promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost is prominent in the Old Testament Scriptures (Is. xxxii. 15; xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28-32), and is confirmed and elucidated in the New (John vii. 38, 39; xiv. 16; xv. 26). This sacred gift bears the unique title 'the promise of the Father', as though to convey the idea that it is the heavenly Father's supreme gift to His believing children (Luke xi. 13), and so to invite our faith. No obedient child of God need fear to seek and claim his Father's special promise.

Which, said He, ye heard of me] Here the narrative passes, according to a usage common in the Greek classics, from the oblique to the direct mode of speech. In Acts xvii. 3; xxiii. 22 we have other instances of the same change of style. The reference here is to such passages as Luke xi. 13; xxiv. 49; John vii. 38, 39; xiv. 16-26; xv. 26; xvi. 7-15. The Saviour had been gradually preparing His followers to understand and expect this supreme gift.

5. Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost] It is noteworthy that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is expressly promised in all four Gospels (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33). This fact alone shews the great importance of the subject. We remember, too, that the supremest office of the Christ was thus announced from heaven, 'the same is He that baptizeth

Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a

with the Holy Spirit' (John i. 33). It is clear, therefore, that the New Testament attaches the greatest possible importance to this endowment with spiritual power.

Not many days hence] Our Lord seems purposely to have left the number of days indefinite, in order to excite their faith and earnestness and expectation. After-events shew that the actual number of days was ten.

6. They therefore] The logical sequence is strange. Instead of facing the main question and setting their hearts forthwith on the promise of the Father, they seized on the words 'not many days hence' and applied them to their own preconceived ideas of an earthly kingdom and mundane glory. We find constantly in human nature a desire and tendency to avoid the more spiritual gifts of the Gospel and to turn aside from main issues on to some tangent of speculation and theological discussion. Cf. Matt. xii. 22-4; John iv. 13-20. Let us cease from vain speculations and useless discussions and claim God's promised gift.

When they were come together] Clearly a different occasion from the one recorded in v. 4, and probably that which is mentioned in Luke xxiv. 50, when the Lord led them out from the city until they came over against Bethany, for the great event of the ascension. Their question shews, however, that this scene must have followed very closely on the events of vv. 4, 5.

Restore the kingdom to Israel] They were still hankering, apparently, after a Jewish earthly monarchy. They interpreted what He had said about 'the kingdom of God' (v. 3) after an earthly and carnal manner, and they misunderstood His statement about 'not many days hence' (v. 5) as referring to a speedy establishment of a visible monarchy. It needed Pentecost to revolutionize completely their ideas and to spiritualize their conceptions. They even appear to have understood the

10 cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold,
11 two men stood by them in white apparel; which also

promise of the coming of the Holy Ghost as the advent of some supernatural power for the promotion of a Jewish kingdom.

7. It is not for you to know] The Saviour did not encourage useless speculations or gratify empty curiosity. He recalled them ~~to the essential and the practical~~ and directed their thoughts again to spiritual things.

The times and seasons] The former of these words often denotes a period of considerable duration; the latter, a shorter and defined epoch. The phrase is peculiar to St. Paul and St. Luke (1 Thes. v. 1; cf. Tit. i. 2-3). God's dispensational periods and special epoch-seasons are appointed by, and retained in, His own authority. Or, as otherwise explained, the 'time-periods' and 'fitting occurrences' belong to Him.

8. Ye shall receive power] Our Lord recalls the thoughts of His disciples to the pentecostal gift, and fixes their attention again on their need of the Holy Ghost. What they required for their future work was 'power from on high'. This word, also, takes us back again to Luke xxiv. 49.

Is come upon you] Cf. xix. 6. We read of the Holy Ghost being 'poured forth' (ii. 17, 18, 33), and of His 'falling upon' believers (viii. 16; x. 44; xi. 15). All these expressions speak of His descent upon His people from on high.

My witnesses] Not 'kings' or 'princes' in an earthly kingdom. Here we have one of the key-words of the Acts of the Apostles. It occurs again in v. 22; ii. 32; iii. 15; v. 32; (vi. 13; vii. 58); x. 39, 41; xiii. 31; xxii. 15, 20; xxvi. 16; while cognate noun-forms occur in iv. 33; (vii. 44); xxii. 18; and the corresponding verb is used in (vi. 3; x. 22); x. 43; xiii. 22; xiv. 3; xv. 8; (xvi. 2), xxii. 5; (xxii. 12); xxiii. 11; xxvi. 5, 22. A cognate compound verb, also, is employed in ii. 40; viii. 25; x. 42; xviii. 5; xx. 21, 23-4; xxiii. 11; xxviii. 23.

These evangelists were to be, above all things, 'witnesses', testifying to what they had themselves seen and heard and

said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld

known. Personal experience must lie behind all true teaching and preaching. We may notice that their testimony was to bear specially on a personal knowledge of the resurrection (i. 22; iii. 15; iv. 33; x. 41, 42).

Jerusalem . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth] It has been already pointed out (Intröd. VIII) that this verse gives us, in brief outline, the very order in which the Gospel was actually propagated, and is thus the key-verse to the whole book, and a compendium of its contents. We notice, too, that our Lord's last thoughts and words, as He ascended to heaven, were for the great wide world of men.

9. As they were looking] Special attention is thus called to the fact that they were eye-witnesses of the ascension, as well as of the resurrection. This follows naturally on the preceding words 'ye shall be My witnesses'. Their eyes were fixed on Him as He ascended, so that there could be no mistake about an event so supernatural.

He was taken up] Or 'lifted up': St. Luke's Gospel tells us that it was in the act of blessing His disciples (Luke xxiv. 50-1). Cf. Mark xvi. 19.

A cloud] Chrysostom calls this cloud 'the royal chariot'. Clouds, in Holy Scripture, are often closely associated with the divine presence. Our Saviour ascended on a cloud. He will likewise come again on the clouds of heaven (Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64; Rev. i. 7).

10. While they were looking steadfastly] The Greek means 'while they continued gazing fixedly'. The verb here employed is peculiar to St. Luke, with the exception of one double occurrence in St. Paul's writings (2. Cor. iii. 7, 13). Our author employs it again in Luke iv. 20; xxii. 56; Acts iii. 4, 12; vi. 15; vii. 55; x. 4; xi. 6; xiii. 9; xiv. 9; xxiii. 1. It denotes 'fixing the eyes on anything', with an intense, earnest gaze. The passages in which it occurs will well repay study.

him going into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath

Two men stood by them in white apparel] Similarly, two angel visitants appeared in connexion with the resurrection (Luke xxiv. 4; John xx. 11, 12). The notices of angels in the Acts are numerous and striking (chapters v. 19, 20; viii. 26; x. 3-7, 30-2; xi. 13, 14; xii. 7-10, 23; xxvii. 23). They are celestial beings who 'do God's pleasure' (Ps. ciii. 20, 21) and 'minister to the heirs of salvation' (Heb. i. 14).

11. Ye men of Galilee] Cf. ii. 7. The mention of their nationality in both these passages emphasizes the fact of their lowly origin and personal incompetency, from a worldly point of view (John i. 46). It serves also to enhance God's grace and power (1. Cor. i. 26-9), and so stands aptly at the opening of this book, which describes the mighty works wrought by God by means of weak human instruments.

Shall so come in like manner] The same chapter which speaks of our Saviour's passion, resurrection, and ascension proceeds to tell of His second advent also. Thus all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel are grouped together in a few verses. The faith of the disciples in the second coming of their Lord was to be a strong stimulus to active labours. In the glow of the advent hope they lived and worked. The Epistles and Apocalypse, too, are radiant with it.

12-26. EVE OF PENTECOST. PETER'S SPEECH. ELECTION OF MATTHIAS

12. Then returned they unto Jerusalem] The very words found in Luke xxiv. 52, of which they are thus an echo. We read there that they returned 'with great joy', gladdened doubtless by the promise and the prospect of the second advent. The verb rendered 'return', is a favourite one with St. Luke, occurring twenty-one times in his Gospel and eleven times in Acts. It is only used three times elsewhere.

From the mount called Olivet] This mode of expression suggests that Theophilus, for whom St. Luke is writing, was a

day's journey off. And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip

stranger to the localities in question, and hence needed careful explanations as to topography. It is usually designated in the New Testament 'the mount of Olives' (Matt. xxi. 1; xxiv. 3; xxvi. 30; Mark xi. 1; xiii. 3; xiv. 26; Luke xix. 37; xxii. 39; John viii. 1); but St. Luke, with a view to Gentile readers, twice uses the term 'the mount that is called the mount of Olives' (xix. 29; xxi. 37), while here he varies the name slightly. The name denotes the range of hills which faces Jerusalem on the east and, lying round about from north-east to south-east, is separated from the city by the valley of Jehoshaphat or Kidron. Its whole length, from north to south, is about two miles, and its average height above the level of the sea is about 2,600 feet, though it has several summits of a slightly higher altitude. It rises about 400 feet above the bed of the Kidron, and towers 200 feet above the highest part of Jerusalem. During the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, it was denuded of the olive trees which once luxuriated there.

A sabbath day's journey off] See Matt. xxiv. 20. The traditional distance allowed for a sabbath day's journey was 2,000 cubits, or about six furlongs. The Rabbis arrived at this measurement by a fanciful connexion and interpretation of Ex. xvi. 29; xxi. 13; and Num. xxxv. 5, 26-7; and by giving an allegorical meaning to the word 'place'. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that the mount of Olives is five or six furlongs distant from Jerusalem, so that the statement of this verse is seen to be correct.

13. Come in] That is 'come into Jerusalem'.

The upper chamber] It has been conjectured, from the occurrence of the definite article, that this upper chamber was the one in which the Saviour had kept the Passover with His disciples and instituted the Lord's Supper (Mark xiv. 15; Luke xxii. 12). We cannot, of course, be sure of this, especially as the Greek noun employed is a different one. In any case, it seems

and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son of*
^{2 Or,} Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the*
^{brother.}
 14 See Jude 1. ² son of James. These all with one accord con-

certain that the chamber referred to here was one belonging to a private house, and the words which follow 'where they were abiding' indicate, apparently, only a temporary occupancy. From the number who assembled there (v. 15), we see that it must have been a room of considerable dimensions.

Both Peter and John] We have here a list of the eleven apostles. With this should be compared the lists contained in the Gospels, *Matt.* x. 2-4; *Mark* iii. 16-19; *Luke* vi. 14-16. In making the comparison, we must remember that the word Zealot is only a translation of the word Cananaean (a transliterated Hebrew word), so that Simon the Cananaean is identical with Simon the Zealot. We shall find that the four lists agree if we suppose that the Thaddeus (called Lebbæus in some copies) of St. Matthew and St. Mark is the same person as the Judas, son of James, who is included in St. Luke's two lists. The only differences are in the order of the names. Of course, Judas Iscariot is here omitted.

14. With one accord] A compound word meaning 'with one heart and mind', indicating perfect unanimity of feeling and desire and purpose. It only occurs once (*Rom.* xv. 6) outside the Acts of the Apostles, but is found again in this book in ii. 1, 46; iv. 24; v. 12; vii. 57; viii. 6; xii. 20; xv. 25; xviii. 12; xix. 29. If we examine these passages, we find God's people

- (a) With one accord in supplication (i. 14).
- (b) " " " " expectation (ii. 1).
- (c) " " " " consecration (iv. 24).
- (d) " " " " separation (v. 12).
- (e) " " " " co-operation (xv. 25).

Their unanimity is still further emphasized by the words 'these all continued'.

Continued steadfastly] The expression is a strong one 'they continued persisting earnestly in prayer'. The verb is used again of unwearied continuance in prayer in ii. 42; vi. 4; *Rom.* xii. 12; *Col.* iv. 2. The same word is employed to shew how the little

tinued steadfastly in prayer, ³ with the women, and Mary
3 Or, with certain women. the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

And in these days Peter stood up in the 15

boat waited persistently for our Lord on the Lake of Galilee (Mark iii. 9), and to describe how the soldiers of Cornelius attended diligently on their master (Act's x. 7). Both these incidents may well furnish us with good illustrations of earnest waiting on God in prayer. Is it not true that 'we have not because we ask not?'

In prayer] 'In the prayer'. The definite article would seem to point to some specific prayer, and certain commentators, noticing this, refer it to some stated form of prayer as being already in use in the Christian community. Is it not more natural, however, to regard it as indicating definite prayer for the gift of the Holy Ghost, that being the great need immediately before them (v. 4)?

With the women] Since there is no definite article in the Greek, the margin reads 'with certain women'. The company doubtless included some, if not all, of those who had ministered so faithfully to their Lord (Matt. xxvii. 56, 61; Mark xv. 40; Luke viii. 2, 3; xxiv. 10). We should expect to find in that upper chamber Mary Magdalene, Salome, Mary of Clopas, Susanna, Joanna, Mary and Martha of Bethany, and others whose names are unknown to us, including possibly the woman who had been so great a sinner (Luke vii. 37). It is characteristic of St. Luke to draw special attention to the women. See also ix. 36-41; xiii. 50; xvi. 14-18; xvii. 4, 12, 34; xviii. 2; xxi. 5, 9; xxiv. 24; xxv. 23. We must notice carefully the fact that they, as well as the apostles and other disciples, received the pentecostal gift. 'Mary the mother of Jesus' comes in appropriately for separate and special mention. This is the last notice of her in Holy Scripture.

And with His brethren] We know their names to have been James, Joseph (or Joses), Simon, and Judas (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3). At first they had shewn themselves unbelieving (John vii. 5), but James was honoured by a special revelation of the risen Lord (1 Cor. xv. 7) which was probably the cause of his

midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude
 16 ^{4 Gr. names.} of *persons gathered* together, about a hundred
 and twenty), Brethren, it was needful that the

complete conversion to a living faith, and, through him, of the conversion of the other brethren too. We notice that they are here distinguished from the eleven apostles, and so that view is proved erroneous which seeks to identify James the son of Alphaeus with the Lord's brother of the same name. We shall meet with the latter several times in the course of this history, and we may take it as practically certain that he was the writer of the General Epistle of James, as also that his brother Jude wrote the General Epistle of Jude.

15. In those days Peter stood up] The days, that is, which elapsed between the Lord's ascension and the day of Pentecost. He had always been to the fore in the days of Christ's earthly ministry, the leading spirit among the disciples. Having received a special commission and charge from his Master (Luke xxii. 31, 32; John xxi. 15-19), it was natural that he should take the lead now.

The brethren] The word which so beautifully describes the disciples of Christ under the aspect of fraternal fellowship (Introd. VI. 5). Its frequent occurrence in the Acts is remarkable.

A multitude of persons] Literally 'a multitude of names', i.e. persons numbered by name. Cf. Rev. iii. 4; xi. 13.

About a hundred and twenty] This did not represent the whole company of disciples (1 Cor. xv. 6), but some of them were no doubt then resident in Galilee, and others may have been absent from divers causes. It was only a minority of them who waited for the promise of the Father in the upper room. History repeats itself, and many Christians still fail to seek the Holy Spirit's power. This verse shews very clearly that the pentecostal baptism was by no means confined to the apostles. A considerable number of others, both men and women, shared it with them.

16. Brethren] Literally, 'Men, brethren', but the meaning is best expressed in English by the text. This form of beginning an address is frequent in the Acts (ii. 29, 37; vii. 2; xiii. 15, 26

scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was 17

38; xv. 7, 13; xxii. 1; xxiii. 1, 6; xxviii. 17), and has analogies in the Greek classics.

The scripture] This refers, most probably, to the passage quoted from the Book of Psalms in v. 20, which was in St. Peter's mind as he commenced to speak, and which foretold the vacating of an apostolic place. Some have supposed that the apostle is referring to Ps. xli. 9, which is definitely applied to Judas in John xiii. 18; but it hardly seems necessary to seek the scripture in question outside the immediate context.

Which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David] We shall find in our study of the Acts that the apostles, at least, had full faith in the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture. It would be difficult to express that fact more strongly than in this verse. The real speaker is declared to be the Holy Ghost, (cf. Heb. iii. 7), and the Psalmist, David, was His 'mouth'. Though this does not imply any eclipse of David's individuality, or any suggestion that his human faculties of mind were not exercised to the full, it predicates, beyond all doubt, a *supernatural inspiration*. Holy men of God 'borne along by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 20-1), wrote and uttered words which often carried a higher meaning than they comprehended themselves (1 Pet. i. 10-11).

Guide to them that took Jesus] See Matt. xxvi. 47-9; Luke xxii. 47; John xviii. 2-3. It is a remarkable fact that the noun here translated 'guide' is always used of unholy men in the New Testament. Thus we have,

(a) Blind guides. Matt. xv. 14; xxiii. 16, 24.

(b) Traitor guides. Acts i. 16.

(c) Sinful guides. Rom. ii. 19-27.

Judas, who might, had he been a true disciple, have guided sinners to know and accept Jesus as their Saviour, proved a traitor and guided the wicked to take Him as their prisoner. The verse which follows makes his crime appear the more heinous.

numbered among us, and received his ¹ portion in this
 18 ministry. (Now this man obtained a field
^{1 Or, lot.} with the reward of his iniquity; and falling

17. He was numbered among us] It is possible to be 'numbered among' Christians, and even among Christian ministers, and yet to have neither part nor lot in the matter. Great privilege does not, of necessity, involve either salvation or holiness.

Received his portion in this ministry] The word translated 'portion' (*κληῆρος*) primarily denoted 'lot' (see margin), then 'that which is assigned by lot', and, finally, 'a share or portion'. Suitably to this, the verb rendered 'received' is the one usually employed for 'obtaining by lot', and it is often used in the Greek classics of obtaining public offices. The language is, of course, used here metaphorically. Judas had received, by a special divine appointment, an important office, that of an apostle. But he failed, to receive his 'portion' of that grace which saves and sanctifies. An official position in the Christian Church is no guarantee, of itself, against perdition.

18. Obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity] Some have seen a discrepancy between this statement and the narrative in Matt. xxvii. 6-10, where we read that it was the chief priests who actually bought the field. The discrepancy however, does not really exist. According to the Jewish law, the thirty pieces of silver were considered still to belong to Judas and to have been applied by him in the purchase of the land; so that St. Peter is only using the language of the customary legal hypothesis when he attributes the act of purchase to the traitor himself (Edersheim). The field in question lay across the valley of Hinnom, a little to the west of, and above, the spot where the Kidron and Hinnom valleys emerge. It consisted of soft, clayey soil, with jagged rocks rising perpendicularly here and there. The identical expression 'reward of iniquity' occurs again in the original of 2 Pet. ii. 13, 15, and so is seen to be a peculiarly Petrine phrase. It refers here, of course, to the thirty pieces of silver which were the price of blood.

Falling headlong, he burst asunder] According to St. Matthew's account, Judas 'hanged himself,' and this has led some

headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the 19 dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their language that field was called Akeldama, that is, The field of blood).

to conclude that we have in the two narratives separate and irreconcilable 'traditions'. But no real discrepancy exists. The facts recorded here are clearly supplementary, not contradictory, to those contained in the Gospel account. It would seem that, when the traitor hanged himself, the rope or girdle with which the noose was made broke under his weight, or possibly the knot became unloosed, and so he fell with violence on to one of those jutting rocks which, as we have seen, emerge from the clayey soil of the potter's field. By headlong, is meant 'head foremost', and, perhaps, 'face downwards'. The word rendered 'burst asunder' occurs only here in the New Testament and really means to 'crack with a loud noise'. All these circumstantial details serve to call attention to the tragic fate of the traitor and so to mark out for special detestation the heinousness of his sin.

19. It became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem] The very publicity of the facts was calculated to prove salutary to those who heard them. The name given to the land itself 'the field of blood' would speak loudly of the crime committed and of the nemesis which overtook the traitor. Great sin is not always visited with signal retribution in this world, but when instances of such retribution occur they remind us that God is a righteous judge and will by no means overlook the commission of evil. They are precursors, too, of the unerring judgment to come which no one can escape whose name is not written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. xx. 11-15; Gal. vi. 7, 8). Cf. also ch. v. 1-11.

In their language] That is, Aramaic or Syro-Chaldaean, the language which, after the Babylonian captivity, gradually displaced Hebrew proper in Palestine, and was universally spoken there in the times of Christ and His apostles. It represented a modernized form of an old Semitic tongue which differed greatly from what is known as 'Hebrew'.

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms,
 Let his habitation be made desolate,
 And let no man dwell therein :

and,

His ¹ office let another take.

21 <sup>1 Gr. over-
 seership.</sup> Of the men therefore which have companied

Akeldama] A Græcized equivalent of the Aramaic 'Hakaldamâ', meaning 'field of blood'. It was so called because it had been bought with the price of blood (Matt. xxvii. 8), and the suicide of Judas there would furnish an additional reason for the name. We notice again St. Luke's careful explanation of Jewish names and terms for his Gentile readers.

20. Let his habitation] The first of these two passages is taken from Ps. lxxix. 25. It is a free quotation from the Septuagint (LXX), or Greek version of the Old Testament, and, in particular, changes the plural number of the original into the singular, suitably to the case of Judas. The sixty-ninth Psalm is frequently quoted in the New Testament and is thoroughly Messianic.

Habitation] The Greek word means either 'sheepcote', or 'farm-building', or 'military camping place', the latter sense approximating most nearly to that of the Hebrew original, Judas's farm and sheepcote were now vacant; his encampment was empty and unoccupied. Never more would he be God's shepherd or husbandman or soldier.

His office let another take] This is a citation, verbatim, from the LXX version of Ps. cix. 8. The Hebrew word represented by 'office' means the office of an overseer, and this was exactly the work (*ἐπισκοπή*) which was opening out before the apostles after their Lord's ascension. St. Peter pleaded that, though Judas's 'habitation' were left desolate, his 'office' should be provided for.

21. Which have companied with us] It is direct and personal knowledge which is required in a witness, and so only they were considered qualified for the vacant post who had been disciples of Christ from first to last. We remember that it

with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out⁷ among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection. And they put forward

22

7 Or, over.

23

was from the company of His intimate disciples that Christ Himself selected His apostles (Luke vi. 13); and they were to 'be with Him' before He could 'send them forth to preach' (Mark iii. 14). Personal acquaintance with Christ is an indispensable qualification in any Christian worker.

22. A witness] See v. 8.

Of His resurrection] The word 'resurrection' occurs again in ii. 31; iv. 2, 33; xvii. 18, 32; xxiii. 6, 8; xxiv. 15, 21; xxvi. 23; and the cognate verb, as used of raising the dead, in ii. 24, 32; iii. 26; x. 41; xiii. 33-4; xvii. 3. A different verb is also found, relating to the resurrection, in iii. 15; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 40; xiii. 30, 37; xxvi. 8. Thus the whole book is full of 'the resurrection' from beginning to end. In more than half its chapters we have either a direct reference to it or else a specific record of the influence and work of the living Christ. The doctrine of the resurrection is, perhaps, the main theme of apostolic teaching, implying, as it does, the consummation of our Saviour's atoning work and also His power and influence as the living Lord. Let us emphasize this great doctrine in India. Our Saviour is no dead prophet or defunct rishi; but a living and almighty Lord, with whom we may have unceasing fellowship and from whom we may derive unfailing strength.

23. They put forward two] This was done, most probably, by the whole company. Two of these present appear to have pre-eminently fulfilled the conditions laid down in vv. 21-2, and hence their selection.

Joseph called Barsabbas who was surnamed Justus] Joseph was evidently his Jewish name. Barsabbas, also a Hebrew word, appears to have been a patronymic or ancestral name, like Bartimaeus or Bar-Jona. It means 'son of Sabba', i.e., 'son of an oath', or 'son of quiet', or 'son of an old man',

two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed
 24 Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou,
 Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew of
 25 these two the one whom thou hast chosen, to take
 the place in this ministry and apostleship, from which

according to various interpretations. The surname Justus is Latin and means just or righteous. It was the custom among many Jews in those days to take Gentile names along with their Hebrew ones. We know nothing further of this man, but, since we read in ch. xv. 22 of a 'Judas called Barsabbas', also of note among the apostles, it is possible that, as they bear the same patronymic, they were brothers by birth. We notice that Joseph's name precedes that of Matthias, as though he were considered the more likely candidate. If so, it is interesting to note that God reversed the order. His thoughts are not our thoughts. No further mention is found of Joseph Barsabbas in sacred writ.

Matthias] This name is abbreviated from Mattathias, a Graecized form of a Hebrew word meaning 'gift of God'. 'Matthew' is another variant of the same name. The Greek equivalent is Theodore. We know nothing of Matthias beyond the notice of this chapter.

24. Prayed and said] We have probably here only a brief epitome of their prayer. It were enough to give the substance of it. It is the first recorded public prayer of the Christian Body.

Which knowest the hearts] This is one word, a compound, in the Greek, and a most unusual one. It occurs again only in ch. xv. 8. The disciples recognized that spiritual fitness was the great qualification for the apostolic office, and so appealed to Him who alone knows the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Chosen] See v. 2, where the same word occurs.

25. Ministry and apostleship] The former of these two words is of a more general character, and speaks of 'service' in all the broad meaning of the term. The latter, apostleship, occurring elsewhere only in Rom. 1. 5; 1 Cor. ix. 2; Gal. ii. 8, is more technical and denotes the special work of Christ's apostles.

Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place. And they gave lots ¹ for them; 1 Or, unto. 26

That he might go to his own place] Notice the double occurrence of the word 'place' in this verse. Judas turned aside from the 'place' of a minister and apostle to go to his own 'place'. How infinitely wide the distance between this place and that. The traitor was styled by the Lord Himself 'the son of perdition' (John. xvii. 12), and there is something inexpressibly sad and solemn in the thought that sin renders a man morally unfit for God's society and banishes him to an environment adapted to his corrupt condition. Judas went from the light of the Saviour's presence to the darkness and sorrow of 'his own place,' and we do well to take warning by his fate.

26. And they gave lots for them] We do not know the mode of their procedure. Possibly, each person present wrote the name of one of the candidates on a small tablet, after which the tablets were placed in a vessel and shaken till one of them fell out, deciding the election. The casting of lots was permissible under the Mosaic law (Lev. xvi. 8; Num. xxvi. 55; Prov. xvi. 33); but this is the sole instance of its being employed by the apostolic Church, and it has often been pointed out that it occurs significantly between the ascension and Pentecost, while the disciples were in an orphaned condition. We never find the lot employed in later Scripture. The practice of using lots and lotteries for money purposes finds no support in the New Testament, and is to be strongly deprecated in every way.

And he was numbered with the eleven apostles] The Greek word literally, means that 'he was numbered by the suffrage of votes' with the eleven apostles. They unaniously accepted him as the twelfth apostle. Some are of opinion that the whole proceeding was unwarranted and that Matthias was thus a man-made, not a God-chosen, apostle. They consider that Saul of Tarsus was appointed by Christ Himself to the vacant post, and point to the fact that no mention is made of Matthias after the so-called election. But this argument really proves too much, since no express mention occurs later in the book of any of the apostles except Peter, James, and John; and it has been

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

pointed out that the passing references to the twelve apostles in ii. 14; vi. 2 tacitly recognize and acknowledge the new appointment. It is best to leave the matter where Holy Scripture leaves it, and not to draw inferences of our own.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER I.

1. *Principal divisions.* The following divisions are suggested for an outline study of the chapter.

- (i) Communing with the living Lord. vv. 1-8.
- (ii) Watching the ascending Lord. vv. 9-10.
- (iii) Expecting the returning Lord. vv. 11-12.
- (iv) Waiting on the empowering Lord. vv. 12-26.

We see their training in vv. 1-11, and their tarrying in vv. 12-26.

2. *Prominent topics.*

(1) The preparation of God's workers.

- (i) They are chosen by the heavenly Master. vv. 2, 24.
- (ii) They have personal knowledge of the living Christ. vv. 3, 22.
- (iii) They are seekers after the anointing of the Spirit. vv. 4-5, 8.
- (iv) They know the power of the ascended Lord. vv. 9-10.
- (v) They are persistent in earnest prayer. vv. 13-14.

The principles thus laid down are, surely, of universal and perpetual obligation. Notice, in particular, the emphasis laid on a *personal vision of the living Christ*, as shewn by the four different Greek verbs denoting 'seeing', found in vv. 3, 9, 10, 11. Notice, also, that a firm faith is required in the Saviour's passion (v. 3), resurrection (v. 3), ascension (v. 9), and second advent (v. 11).

(2) The description of God's workers.

- (i) Apostles, missionaries, sent-ones. vv. 2, 26. Though primarily applicable only to the twelve, it has a meaning for all workers.
- (ii) Witnesses. vv. 8, 22.

And when the day of Pentecost ¹ was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound ^{1 Or, was} ² *being fulfilled.*

(iii) Brethren. vv. 15, 16.

(iv) Men which have companied with Christ and His people. v. 21.

These titles emphasize, respectively, their *commission, testimony, unity, and fellowship.*

(3) The work of the Holy Spirit. He, the divine Paraclete, is here seen to be,

(i) The inspirer of Holy Scripture. v. 16.

(ii) The instructor of God's people. v. 2.

(iii) The empowerer of Christ's servants. v. 8.

CHAPTER II.

1-13. THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

1. **The day of Pentecost]** The Greek word Pentecost means fiftieth, having reference to the fact that the feast then celebrated was kept on the fiftieth day after the offering of the barley sheaf on the day following the Passover Sabbath (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16). The name was in common use among the Hellenistic Jews and is found in some of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament (Tobit; 2 Macc). The festival was the second of the three great annual Jewish feasts, occurring between the Passover and the feast of Tabernacles. In the Old Testament it bears the names 'feast of weeks' (Exod. xxxiv. 22; Deut. xvi. 10), 'the feast of harvest' (Exod. xxiii. 16), and 'the day of the firstfruits' (Num. xxviii. 26).

It marked the close of the wheat or grain harvest (Exod. xxxiv. 22), not that of the entire harvest of all the produce of the land which was commemorated later by the feast of Tabernacles or ingathering. It was regarded emphatically, therefore, as the 'feast of the firstfruits'. In order to emphasize this feature of it, the special offering appointed consisted, apart from the other sacrifices, of two wave loaves made from the newly gathered wheat 'for firstfruits unto the Lord' (Lev. xxiii. 17).

as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there

Another characteristic of the feast was gratitude for deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Deut. xvi. 12), while it was specially appointed also that no servile work was to be done (Lev. xxiii. 21). As time went on, the Jews came to associate with it a further commemoration, that of the giving of the Law at Sinai on the fiftieth day, as they reckoned, after the exodus from Egypt. In the days of the apostles it was the most numerous attended of all the Jewish feasts, since the dangers of travel, especially by sea, during the early spring and late autumn, prevented many from coming to either the Passover or the feast of Tabernacles. It occurred about the month of May. In every respect, therefore, the day was a most appropriate one for the descent of the Holy Ghost:

- (a) As the day when a cosmopolitan assembly was gathered in Jerusalem, it provided a grand opportunity for the first great dissemination of the Gospel.
- (b) As the day of the firstfruits, it was a suitable one for the conversion of the three thousand, the firstfruits of a greater harvest yet to be gathered in.
- (c) As the day of the commemoration of deliverance from bondage, it illustrated the work of the Holy Ghost, for 'where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty' (2 Cor. iii. 17).
- (d) As the day which, to the later Jews at least, spoke of the promulgation of their great Law from Sinai, it was a fitting one for the first great promulgation of the Gospel from Jerusalem by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Just as the feast of the Passover found its fulfilment on the day of the Saviour's crucifixion, so the feast of the firstfruits found its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost. It remains only for the feast of Tabernacles to be fulfilled at our Lord's second coming, when the harvest of the earth shall have been completely gathered in.

We should notice, also, the perfect agreement here of type with anti-type. Our Saviour, as the Lamb of God, died on

appeared unto them tongues ^{1 Or, parting among them.} parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one ^{Or, distributing themselves.} of them. And they were all filled with the 4

the cross, and so fulfilled the meaning of the Paschal feast (Lev. xxiii. 5). On the morrow after the Paschal Sabbath, i.e., on Easter Sunday, He arose again, in exact conformity with the type, as the 'sheaf of the firstfruits' (Lev. xxiii. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 20). On the fiftieth day after the presentation of that resurrection sheaf the firstfruits of the harvest were gathered in upon the day of Pentecost (Lev. xxiii. 15-17).

Was now come] More correctly, as in the margin, 'was being fulfilled' (an exclusively Lukan verb). This expression seems to point to the fact that the day was yet very young (cf. v. 15). Perhaps it suggests that it could not be properly 'fulfilled' till the Holy Spirit was out-poured.

All] That is, all the disciples assembled in Jerusalem (i. 15), men and women, and not the apostles only. Notice the frequent reiteration of the word in this chapter (vv. 4, 7, 12, 14, 17, 21, 32, 36, 39, 43, 44, 45). As regards the disciples, we see that

- (a) They were all assembled. v. 1.
- (b) They were all filled. v. 4.
- (c) They all preached. vv. 7, 17.
- (d) They were all witnesses. v. 32.
- (e) They all shared their possessions. v. 44.

God's rich blessings are not for a select few, but for all His believing and obedient people.

Together] This word is only found elsewhere in the New Testament in St. John's Gospel. The passages may be collated and studied (John iv. 36; xx. 4; xxi. 2).

In one place] 'In the same spot'. As they were one in desire and object, so they were gathered together in one place. This was, most probably, the upper chamber of chapter i. 13. This identical phrase occurs in several other passages. We see believers gathered 'in one place' for prayer (i. 15), for power (ii. 1), for participation (ii. 44), for progress (ii. 47), and for profit (1 Cor. xiv. 23-5). The expression 'all together in one place', especially

Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout

in the original language, is a most striking one and points to perfect unity and unanimity of heart, thought, and purpose. Does not the disunion which exists among Christians seriously hinder a manifestation of pentecostal power and grace?

2. Suddenly] An adverb peculiar to the Acts of the Apostles (xvi. 26; xxviii. 6). God's mighty works often occur suddenly and unexpectedly.

From heaven] Cf. John iii. 27-31; vi. 33; Acts xxii. 6. 'Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above' (Jas. i. 17). We must remember the source and origin of the pentecostal gift.

A sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind] The 'wind' in Scripture is one of the emblems of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 14; John iii. 8). The word here translated 'wind' is not the ordinary one, and occurs again in the New Testament only in ch. xvii. 25, where it is rendered 'breath'. It means a blowing, a blast, a breath. The literal translation of the verse would be 'a sound as of a mighty blast borne along'. We may compare 'the voice borne along' from the excellent glory (2 Pet. i. 17), and 'men borne along by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 21). It should be carefully noticed that the verse does not state that a wind came from heaven, as many have supposed, but only that a sound came from heaven which resembled the sound of the rushing of a mighty wind. It was an entirely supernatural sound, and not one due to ordinary physical phenomena. We are clearly to understand, therefore, that a miraculous sound from heaven was suddenly heard, and that it resembled the sound of a mighty wind or breath borne on and on. The phenomenon must have been awful in its mystery. There was, probably, no motion in the air, and yet the sound was as though a hurricane were raging.

It filled all the house] The natural interpretation of the text is that 'the sound', not a wind, filled all the house. Just as

men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them the phenomena of light and sound bespeak the presence of invisible energy, so this 'sound' told of the coming of the divine Spirit.

3. **Appeared unto them]** Or, more simply, 'were seen by them'.

Tongues parting asunder, like as of fire] Here again, it is not said that the tongues were of fire, but only that they resembled tongues of fire. The supernatural is likened to the natural, but differs from and transcends it. We are not dealing with physical fire in this verse, any more than we had to do with physical wind in the preceding one; and, therefore, we are not to look, in this record, for the ordinary physical effects of either wind or fire. We are face to face with the sphere of the spiritual and supernatural, and may expect to find results corresponding and commensurate.

The sense of the original is, perhaps, best expressed by the rendering 'tongues like as of fire, distributing themselves', (see margin). It was, so far as we can comprehend it, as though a shower of fire-like tongues appeared and distributed themselves among the company, so that one rested on each of those assembled. Doubtless this was the 'baptism with fire' referred to in Matt. iii. 11; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33.

We can hardly fail to read the meaning of the symbol. These 'witnesses' were to speak to their fellowmen the things of God, and hence the emblem of the 'tongue'. The power which was to glow in their message was the burning power of God the Holy Ghost, and hence the emblem of the heavenly fire. 'Tongues like as a fire' were what these men and women were most of all in need of, if they were to move the world by their preaching. The 'tongue like as of fire' is the symbol of aggressive Christianity. And this mysterious fire speaks, too, of purity and love, for fire cleanses and burns.

Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

7 speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these 8 which speak Galilæans? And how hear we, every

It sat] As though to shew that the power, of which the fire-like 'tongue' was the outward symbol, had come to abide.

Upon each of them] The individual is not lost to view in the corporate body of believers. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was a personal one for each individual. When we speak, therefore, of the Holy Spirit being 'given to the Church' on the day of Pentecost, let us not forget that we mean by that phrase that He was given to each individual member of the Church. The reception of the Holy Ghost, like the reception of salvation, is a personal and individual experience. Notice the repetition of the word 'each' in this chapter (vv. 6, 8, 38). Each man, for himself, is to hear, repent, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost] All. See v. 1. It denotes the whole company, 'apostles and others, men and women. The external phenomena were subordinate, after all, to this supreme internal endowment. The words are wonderfully simple, and yet express a truth surpassing understanding. What a vital difference the coming of the Spirit in His fulness to their hearts made to those first disciples. The weak become strong; the timid, bold; the carnal, spiritual. While God makes use of human language to make eternal verities intelligible to our finite understandings, we must not forget the limitations thus involved. When we speak therefore of being 'filled with the Spirit', we must remember that the Holy Ghost is a divine person, one and indivisible, not a divisible substance like fire or air or water. We may understand the verse to mean, therefore, that the Holy Spirit took entire possession of them to the full, and imparted to them, to the fullest extent of their capacity, His grace and power. The command holds good for every real Christian 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Eph. v. 18). We, too, are to seek and obtain this pentecostal gift.

Began to speak with other tongues] It does not say 'unknown tongues', but 'other tongues', i.e. languages other than the native

man in our own language, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus

tongues of the speakers. Cf. Mark xvi. 17. It is clearly not without appropriate reason that, just after the supernatural 'tongues' had sat upon them, an apt emblem of their work as 'witnesses', they should 'begin to speak' under the control of the Holy Spirit. The context shews us that the 'tongues' in which they spoke were understood by those who heard them, Jews and strangers from various lands (vv. 6-11). The gift which they exercised, therefore, was one of practical utility, as regards the hearers. Difference of opinion exists, however, as to whether the 'other tongues' were used in ecstatic worship of God or in actual 'telling forth' of the Gospel. The expression in v. 11, 'we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God', is capable of either interpretation, for they may have extolled His 'mighty works' either by way of adoration or by way of exhortation. The other two instances in the Acts in which we meet with the 'gift of tongues' also leave the matter in some measure of doubt; for, while Cornelius and his friends, on receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, are said to 'speak with tongues and magnify God' (x. 46), possibly after the manner of worship, it is stated of the Ephesian Christians that they, under similar conditions, 'spoke with tongues and prophesied', or preached (xix. 6). Cf. Matt. vii. 22; Mark vii. 6-7; 1 Cor. xiv. 3-31 where the same verb occurs. Perhaps a fair consideration of these two passages shews that both worship and public speaking or preaching were included in the usage of the gift; and, since St. Peter distinctly claims in the discourse which follows here (vv. 16-18) that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost 'On My servants and on My handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy', it is difficult to see how actual preaching or exhortation in foreign tongues can be excluded from the passage before us. It appears that the tendency to interpret this verse in the exclusive sense of ecstatic worship arises from a wish to harmonize this chapter with what we read of strange tongues in the church of Corinth (1 Cor. xiv. 1-19), where, apparently, men spoke and

10 and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners 11 from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and

prayed in the Christian assemblies in other and unknown tongues by way of worshipping rather than of preaching. It hardly seems right, however, to explain what took place at Pentecost by what occurred much later at Corinth, especially since the phenomena present points of strong dissimilarity on comparison. Some, indeed, are of opinion that the gift of tongues at Pentecost was different in kind from the phenomena of tongues as we find them in after years in Corinth, and their arguments are not without great force. Here we have 'tongues' understood by the hearers, needing no interpretation, and bearing a distinct evangelistic value. There, on the other hand, we have 'tongues' which were often unintelligible even to those who used them (1 Cor. xiv. 2, 14) and needing interpretation if they were to be anything but a stumbling block to others (1 Cor. xiv. 11, 13, 16, 17, 27, 28). But whether different in *kind* or not, there is clearly a distinct difference *in the manner and effect of their usage.* On the day of Pentecost, at least, the 'tongues' were employed to express to foreigners who understood their meaning the 'mighty works of God', and were the means of attracting the attention of thousands to the Gospel message.

We are not to understand, however, that the first messengers of the Gospel received miraculously, once for all, the gift of preaching to men of every land in their own language, wherever they might go. It was clearly a special gift for a special purpose and on special occasions. For example, it appears evident that St. Paul did not understand the speech of Lycaonia (ch. xiv. 11-14), though he had received the gift of 'tongues' in an unusual degree (1 Cor. xiv. 18), for he seems not to have known at first the intentions of the heathen at Lystra (see notes there). Phenomena claiming to be ecstatic utterances in unknown tongues have appeared in later periods of Church history; e.g. among the Franciscans of the thirteenth century, the Jansenists, the Irvingites, and others; and, still more recently, in America, Europe, India, and elsewhere. But, while we may respect the earnestness and sincerity of many of those who have professed to exercise

Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. And they were all amazed, 12 and were perplexed, saying one to another, What

such gifts, the evidence is scarcely such as to justify us in regarding them as a real reproduction of New Testament phenomena.

As the Spirit gave them utterance] Literally. 'As the Spirit continued giving them to speak out in a clear, loud voice'. The verb 'to speak out clearly' occurs again in the New Testament only in v. 14 and ch. xxvi. 25. Peter speaking out before the crowd and Paul speaking out before the king and governor are good illustrations of its meaning. There was no 'uncertain sound'. In the LXX, this verb is used of the utterances of prophets.

5. There were dwelling] This verb, which has already occurred twice (i. 19, 20), and will be found again in this very chapter (vv. 9, 14), is a favourite one with St. Luke in the Acts, being used in all twenty times. It usually denotes more than a temporary residence, and so may possibly indicate here Jews of the dispersion who had returned to take up their abode in their fatherland, as distinguished from the mere visitors to the feast. However that may be, the 'multitude' (v. 6) which came together certainly included many temporary visitors.

Devout men] The adjective is peculiar to St. Luke in the New Testament. He uses it of Simeon (Luke ii. 25), of those who buried Stephen (Acts viii. 2), and of Ananias of Damascus (xxii. 12). It denotes careful, scrupulous worshippers, who handle divine things reverently.

From every nation under heaven] A general expression, equivalent here to 'from many lands'. Jews were to be found in practically every civilized country. Jerusalem contained, at the feast of Pentecost, a sort of cosmopolitan assembly, which we may well regard as representing the whole human race in its need of Jesus Christ.

6. This sound] A different word in the Greek from the one used in v. 2, and usually denoting 'voice or utterance'. The

13 meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up

most natural interpretation is to refer it to the miraculous utterance of God's mighty works by the disciples in other tongues.

Were confounded] A verb peculiar to the Acts (ix. 22; xix, 32; xxi. 27, 31). The cognate noun is found only in xix. 29 (confusion). Coming from a root which means 'to pour together', it denotes confusion and perplexity of mind.

In his own language] We see how great must have been the variety of tongues employed. The word 'language' corresponds to our word 'dialect' and is peculiar to the Acts (i. 19; ii. 8; xxi. 40; xxii. 2; xxvi. 14). It will include not only distinct languages but also local varieties of them, as, for example, different dialects of Greek, Persian, and other languages.

7. **Were amazed]** A strong word, 'were distraught,' expressing the immediate effect on them of the miracle. In the New Testament, it is used chiefly by St. Luke, and occurs again in Acts. ii. 12; viii. 9, 11, 13; ix. 21; x. 45; xii. 16.

Marvelled] 'Kept wondering'. The tense of the verb (imperfect) indicates the continued effect on their minds after the first burst of amazement.

Galilæans] The inner circle of Christ's disciples, at least, were known as 'Galilæans' even before His death (Matt. xxvi. 69-73), and were despised as natives of a comparatively uncivilized district (John i. 46; vii. 52) speaking a provincial dialect (Mark xiv. 70). That such men should now speak freely in foreign tongues was indeed a matter of astonishment. As we know, the term Galilæans came to be used as one of reproach of all Christians, and was assiduously employed of them by the apostate emperor Julian.

8. **Language]** See v. 6.

9. **Parthians]** The Parthians were inhabitants of a mountainous and fertile country south of the Caspian Sea, bounded on the north by Hyrcania, on the south by Carmania, on the

his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For 15

west by Media, and on the east by Ariana. Their origin is obscure, but authentic history shews them subjugated, though not without occasional successful revolts, by the Persians, and, later, by the Greeks, from whom they finally revolted under Arsaces. They became afterwards a formidable nation and extended their sway from India to the Tigris and from Chorasmia to the Indian Ocean. They were the most dreaded, perhaps, of all the foes of the Roman Empire.

Those alluded to in this verse were, of course, Jewish residents in Parthia, with, possibly, some proselytes; and the same remark applies to the representatives of the other countries and races in the list which follows (see v. 10).

Medes] Their country is said to have been bounded on the north by part of the Caspian Sea; on the south by Persia, Susiana, and part of Assyria; on the east by Parthia and Hyrcania, and on the west by Assyria and Armenia Major. Like Parthia, it was mountainous in character. It now forms the north-western part of the kingdom of Persia.

The Medes belonged to the Iranian branch of the great Aryan race, the Persians being a kindred people from the same stock. There is a good deal of confusion in history about them, some historians using the term 'Mede' in rather a vague sense. But they were undoubtedly an important people, especially prior to the Persian ascendancy.

Elamites] They were inhabitants of that province of the old Persian and Babylonian empires known as Susiana. It lay north of the Persian Gulf, being bounded by the Tigris on the west, Media on the north, and Persia on the south and east. They were of Semitic origin (cf. Gen. x. 22). The word Elam, however, is often used as synonymous with Persia.

Mesopotamia] The word means 'that which is between the rivers' and denotes the country between the Euphrates and the Tigris. It was known among the Hebrews of the Old Testament

these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is *but*
 16 the third hour of the day; but this is that
 1 Or, *through*. which hath been spoken ¹ by the prophet Joel;

as *Aram-naharâim* (Gen. xxiv. 10. marg.) It lay north-west of Elam and west of Media.

Judæa] The enumeration still proceeds in a westerly (S. W.) direction. Many of those present at the feast were, of course, natives of Judæa, and, since their dialect of Aramaic differed from that of Galilee, it is only natural to include them in the catalogue.

Cappadocia] The enumeration now proceeds, in natural order, to Asia Minor. Cappadocia was a large country in the east of Asia Minor, north-west of Palestine. It was administered, at this period, by a procurator appointed by the Roman emperor. It was bounded on the south by Cilicia, on the north by Pontus, on the east by Armenia and Mesopotamia, and on the west by Phrygia and Galatia. It is mentioned again in 1 Pet. i. 1.

Pontus] A large district of Asia Minor, bordering on the southern coast of the Euxine Sea. It lay north of Cappadocia. Part of the kingdom of Pontus was incorporated by the Romans in their united province of Bithynia and Pontus in 64 B.C., while the rest of it continued for a time under other rulers. It is uncertain whether the Pontus mentioned here is the Roman province of that name, or the other part of the country, though, most probably, it denotes the former. We find the name mentioned again in Acts xviii. 2 and 1 Pet. i. 1.

Asia] The name Asia in the New Testament always denotes the Roman province so called.¹ This was formed in 133 B.C., being placed under the government of a pro-consul. It was known as pro-consular Asia. It embraced the western parts of the peninsula of Asia Minor, including Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and most of Phrygia. Its chief city was Ephesus. Pergamos and Smyrna were also very important towns in it. We shall meet with it frequently in the narrative of the Acts.

10. Phrygia] A large district of Asia Minor lying east of

¹ Here, however, it would seem to be used in the more popular sense, as denoting the Aegean coast lands, and so excluding Phrygia.

And it shall be in the last days, saith God, 17
 I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh :
 And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

pro-consular Asia, and having Bithynia on the north, and Galatia on the east. Its extent varied at different periods of history. In the Roman period, it was divided into Asian and Galatic Phrygia, the former being united with the Roman province of Asia. It is probably Galatic Phrygia which is intended here, as it follows immediately on Asia in the list.¹ The name occurs again in xvi. 6 and xviii. 23.²

Pamphylia] A country on the south coast of Asia Minor, bounded on the east by Cilicia, on the west by Lycia, and on the north by Mt. Taurus. It consisted of a narrow strip of coast land eighty miles long, with a breadth never exceeding twenty-five miles. We shall read of it again in xiii. 13; xiv. 24; xv. 38; xxvii. 5.

Egypt] The enumeration now crosses the Mediterranean southwards. Egypt requires no description here. We know from history that large colonies of Jews had settled in Alexandria, as also, to a less extent, in other cities of northern Egypt.

The parts of Libya about Cyrene] Libya, according to Greek parlance, was practically equivalent to Africa. Here it probably denotes the province of Libya which stretched along the coast of Africa, west of Egypt, lying over against Crete; and, in particular, the westerly portion of that province called Libya Cyrenaica, which was fertile and possessed some notable cities. Of these, Cyrene was the chief, and Jews formed there, according to Josephus, one-fourth of its population. It lay about half way between Carthage and Alexandria. We find other references to it in Matt. xxvii. 32; Mark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26; Acts vi. 9; xi. 20; xiii. 1.

Sojourners from Rome] We now recross the Mediterranean to the imperial city, the most westerly point touched in the catalogue before us. The meaning is 'people from Rome (and perhaps other cities of the west) temporarily sojourning in Jerusalem for the

¹ Unless we regard 'Asia' as used in a popular sense, excluding Phrygia altogether.

² But see notes there.

And your young men shall see visions,
 And your old men shall dream dreams:

18 ^{1 Gr. bond-} Yea and on my ¹ servants and on my
^{men.} ^{2 Gr. bond-} ² handmaidens in those days
^{maidens.}

feast. We know both from Latin authors and from Josephus that Jews were very numerous in Rome at this period. Perhaps it was some of these Roman Jews who, converted at Pentecost, founded the Christian Church in that city (see xxviii. 14, 15).

Jews and proselytes] This may refer either to the Roman visitors or to the whole preceding list. The word proselyte means 'newcomer' and denotes a convert to Judaism, one who accepted circumcision and embraced the Jewish religion. There is good reason for supposing that such converts had to undergo a sort of baptism or purificatory rite before formal admission to their new privileges, and also to make special offerings. We shall meet with persons in the course of this history who, though accepting the main tenets of Judaism, appear not to have been full proselytes, in that they had not received circumcision and so crossed the line between their old religion and the Jewish Church. Cornelius (ch. x) is an example of this class.

11. Cretans] Here the enumeration turns eastward again. Crete, now called Candia, is an island of the Mediterranean sixty miles south of Greece. It is 156 miles long, and varies in breadth from seven to thirty miles. Its original inhabitants were, most probably, kindred with those of Asia Minor. Under the Romans, it was joined to Cyrene and became a senatorial province. Jewish settlers were very numerous there.

We read of Crete again in Acts xxvii. 7, 12, 13, 21; Tit. i. 5, 12.

Arabians] The list closes with the inhabitants of that large peninsula which lies between the mainlands of Asia and Africa, stretching betwixt the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Thus the enumeration of races and countries, though it begins in the east and at first proceeds westward with some amount of uniformity, afterwards turns south and then north-west, and finally returns to the east again. It embraces, broadly speaking, (1) Eastern or Babylonian Jews; (2) Syrian Jews; (3) Egyptian Jews; and (4) Roman Jews.

Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall
prophesy.

And I will shew wonders in the heaven above, 19

The mighty works of God] Of. x. 46. A unique expression in the New Testament, though Luke i. 49 is somewhat similar. Some regard it as implying quotations from the Psalms used in ecstatic worship; others as indicating a setting forth of God's 'mighty works' as seen in the passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord. It must surely include, in any case, the 'mighty works' of God in the redemption of the world and the sending of the Holy Ghost.

12. Amazed] See v. 7, where the same word occurs in the same tense.

Were perplexed] 'Were utterly at a loss'. The word is peculiar to St. Luke (Luke ix. 7; Acts v. 24; x. 17), and so helps to show his authorship of the Acts.

13. Others] They represent a different class of on-lookers, possibly hostile persons of the hierarchical party or sceptical worldlings of the Herodian type.

These are filled with new wine] Literally 'sweet wine'. The enthusiasm which prevailed, the strange and abnormal utterances, and the ecstatic joy were unaccountable to these sceptics save on the hypothesis that it was exhilaration produced by intoxicating drink. Bengel well remarks 'The world begins with mocking; then it proceeds to questions (iv. 7), to threats (iv. 17), to imprisonments (v. 18), to blows (v. 40), and to murder (vii. 58)'. He adds 'Natural men are wont ignorantly and impudently to attribute supernatural things to natural causes'.

14-36. PETER'S DISCOURSE.

14. Peter] He has lost his cowardice now. The man who denied his Lord before a servant-girl now proclaims Him boldly before assembled thousands. The baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire has cleansed and strengthened him.

With the eleven] As leaders of the infant Church, and bearers of a special commission.

And signs on the earth beneath ;
 Blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke :

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,

Lifted up his voice] The same expression occurs again in xiv. 11 ; xxii. 22. It would need a loud voice to reach so vast a multitude.

Spake forth] See v. 4, where the same verb is found. He spoke, almost certainly, in the Aramaic tongue, the vernacular of Palestine. Perhaps this is why he addressed himself specially to the 'men of Judæa' and those 'that dwell in Jerusalem'.

15. It is but the third hour of the day] The 'third hour', that is, reckoned from sunrise. According to Jewish computation, the day and night were each divided into twelve equal parts called hours. These would vary in length, according to the duration of daylight. But we may say, roughly speaking, that the 'third hour of the day' would be about nine o'clock a.m. It was the earliest of the stated hours of prayer, and the time of offering the morning sacrifice. Men do not, usually, drink to excess in the early morning. It is stated, moreover, that the Jews took wine with flesh only, and that never in the morning but only in the evening; also that they abstained from food till midday on the occasion of their great festivals. We cannot fail to remark how sober Peter was, alike in his words and deeds and arguments.

16. This is that, etc.] We notice that the apostle claims Pentecost to be the true fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, and not merely a sort of preliminary and partial fulfilment of it.

By the prophet Joel] The quotation is from Joel ii. 28-32. It agrees with the LXX version, with a few slight deviations.

17. In the last days] Both the Hebrew and Septuagint have 'afterwards'. This is now made more specific, 'in the last days', i.e., the Messianic times, the days beginning with the first coming of Christ.

I will pour forth of my Spirit] The words speak of copious effusion and communication. God 'giveth not the Spirit by measure' (John iii. 34). The same verb is used again in vv. 18, 33; ch. x. 45; Tit. iii. 6, in the same connexion. See also

And the moon into blood,
Before the day of the Lord come,
That great and notable *day*:

note on i. 8. The partitive expression 'of (or from) my Spirit' probably refers to the gifts and graces which proceed from the Paraclete.

Upon all flesh] Not only upon the company who were filled with the Holy Ghost in the upper chamber. There is a share in this pentecostal gift for all (v. 39), and it is ours to claim our portion, in the obedience of faith. For the word 'all', see v. 1, note.

Your sons and your daughters] This pentecostal endowment is for male and female (v. 18). Our attention has already been called to the fact that there were women in the company who were filled with the Holy Ghost (i. 14; ii. 1, 4).

Shall prophesy] The word 'prophesy' is not to be understood in its more technical sense of predicting. It means 'to speak forth' God's word and messages in preaching and exhortation. We see, therefore, that, in spite of the passages which forbid women to teach officially in the congregation, they are not by any means precluded from proclaiming God's word in public. Cf. xxi. 9. This verse suggests that the 'tongues' of v. 4 were certainly used in telling forth God's messages.

Your young men, etc.] This line and the following are transposed from the order of the original passage in Joel, where the 'old men' come first.

Visions] These represent more especially appearances to those who are awake. They are naturally attributed to young men in the vigour of their strength and wide-awake activity.

Dreams] Denoting more particularly appearances to those who are asleep. These are suitably assigned to the old men, with the calmer and less active and excited frame of more advanced age. But, of course, the two words are not to be regarded as mutually exclusive. While it is true that God thus vouchsafes 'visions and dreams', we must be careful not to trust every

- 21 And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- 22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth,

dream and vision which comes within the range of our experience, lest we go astray. The written word of God is the impregnable rock on which we must always stand. We may notice too, that every vision recorded in the Acts bears directly on the missionary work of the Church and so has an evangelistic value.

18. On my servants and on my handmaidens] Some take this merely as a reiteration, in another form, of v. 17, in the sense 'on my male and female worshippers'. Others understand it as referring to social status, 'bondmen and bondwomen', so as to include the most lowly and despised in the promise. Servitude was to be no bar to their participation in the blessing. On the whole, it seems best to regard it as emphasizing another aspect of the recipients of God's Spirit. Whilst, on the one hand, they are 'sons and daughters', on the other hand they are His 'bondservants', and full obedience to His will is necessary to a reception of pentecostal power (ch. v. 32).

Will I pour forth, etc.] The very repetition of the promise encourages faith and invites assurance. God graciously says the wonderful words over again, that none may doubt them.

And they shall prophesy] These words are likewise a repetition. They do not occur in Joel's prophecy, and are therefore to be regarded as meant to emphasize the fact that the gift of Pentecost is intended for powerful and effectual witnessing (i. 6). Are we 'filled with the Spirit'? Then let us preach the Gospel.

19. Wonders and signs] The dispensation ushered in by the day of Pentecost will conclude with the second advent of our Lord. To St. Peter, as he spoke, the whole dispensation appeared in its entirety. Part of the promise, affecting its closing stages, still remains to be fulfilled. Our Lord's discourse in Matt. xxiv. 29-31 throws light on this passage. The word 'signs' is an addition to Joel's words. Bloodshed and conflagration on the

a man approved of God unto you by ¹mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves ^{1 Gr. powers.}

earth and fearful portents in the sky are in prospect here. See also v. 22, note.

20. The day of the Lord] A well-known expression in the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures denoting the coming period of the Lord's manifested power, glory, and justice. See, e.g., Isa. ii. 12; xiii. 6; Joel ii. 1; Amos v. 18; Zech. xiv. 1; Mal. iv. 5. Viewed in the light of the New Testament, it signifies the day when our Lord Jesus will return in power and glory for the judgment of His enemies and consummation of His kingdom (2 Pet. iii. 10).

Notable] The Hebrew has 'terrible', but the word is thus rendered in the LXX which is here quoted. The Greek word means 'manifest' as well as 'glorious', and corresponds to the noun 'epiphany' or 'manifestation' which is frequently used in the New Testament of our Saviour's second coming.

21. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved] Though this promise may have some special reference to the period of terror and judgement just alluded to (Isa. xxvi. 9), it also characterizes the whole dispensation of the Holy Ghost.

'Whosoever', whether Jew or Gentile, corresponds to the 'all flesh' of v. 17. 'Call on the name of the Lord'; i.e., 'invoke the name of Jesus Christ' (Phil. ii. 9-11), in faith, supplication, and worship. See also vii. 59; ix. 14, 21; xxii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 22, where the same expression occurs; and compare Rom. x. 12-14 where the same quotation is referred directly to Christ.

St. Peter now proceeds in his address to shew that Jesus of Nazareth is the exalted Lord on whom men must call in order to salvation.

22. Ye men of Israel] A wider designation than that of v. 14, embracing all the race of Jacob and emphasizing the dignity and glory of the theocratic nation. This preacher is courteous and wise in his mode of address.

23 know; him, being delivered up by the determinate
¹ Or, men
without the
law. counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by
 the hand of ¹lawless men did crucify and

Jesus of Nazareth] The name by which our Lord was commonly known (Matt. xxi. 11). But perhaps the apostle purposely uses the name which expresses the Saviour's once lowly and despised condition, the better to enhance His present glorious and exalted state (v. 36). Only a few weeks before, this very title had been inscribed as a reproach upon the cross. Let them now think of it as written in golden letters on the throne of glory. Cf. iii. 6; iv. 10.

Approved] The word means more than that, 'shewn forth publicly', 'displayed' (1 Cor. iv. 9), and so accredited. Cf. John. iii. 2; v. 36, 37; xiv. 11.

Mighty works and wonders and signs] These three words represent different aspects of our Lord's miraculous works, expressing respectively their nature, appearance, and intention. The word rendered 'mighty works' (*δυνάμεις*) calls attention to the miracles as manifestations of the mighty power of God (cf. Matt. xi. 21, 23). The word 'wonders' (*τέρατα*) speaks of them as startling, wonder-exciting portents, arresting attention by their marvellous character. (cf. v. 19; ch. vii. 36). The word 'signs' (*σημεῖα*) tells of their ethical end and purpose, as indicators or tokens of spiritual truths. In St. John's Gospel, Christ's miracles are always 'signs' setting forth heavenly things. We shall find the expressions 'wonders' and 'signs' occurring together frequently in the Acts (ii. 19, 22, 43; iv. 30; v. 12; vi. 8; vii. 36; xiv. 3). The Saviour's miraculous works of mercy, each of them carrying an ethical object and lesson with it, are widely differentiated from the supposed miracles in other religions, which are often grotesque and shocking to the moral sense. The 'wonders' and 'signs' of the New Testament are generally works of healing and mercy.

As ye yourselves know] The Holy Ghost, through the apostle, convicts the Jews of sin in rejecting the attestation of Christ's

slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs 24
of death: because it was not possible that he should
be holden of it. For David saith concerning him, 25

miraculous works. They could not plead ignorance. There was no excuse, therefore, for rejecting His claims. See John ix. 39-41; xv. 24-5; xvi. 9. Sin against light and knowledge is inexcusable and fatal.

23. Him] The word is added for emphasis. 'The very person whom God the Father delighted to honour and accredit, you have dishonoured, rejected, slain'.

Delivered up] This word speaks of the Father's love for fallen man. He deliberately 'handed over' the Son of His love into the hands of His enemies for the redemption of the world.

Determinate] The same word is found again in x. 42 (ordained). It means 'appointed', 'determined', 'decreed,' as though 'marked out with a boundary'. God's plan and purpose in the atonement were formulated and determined on before the world began (Rev. xiii. 8; 2 Tim. i. 9).

Counsel] Cf. iv. 28. The term implies 'will' and 'determination' as well as 'counsel' and 'design'. It is used in the New Testament chiefly by St. Luke. We shall meet with it again in iv. 28; v. 38; xiii. 36; xx. 27; xxvii. 12, 42.

Foreknowledge] This word is peculiar to St. Peter, who uses it again in 1 Pet. i. 2. The same foreknowledge of God the Father which beheld Christ as the Lamb of God upon the cross also beheld Christ's redeemed ones cleansed, obedient, sanctified.

When we speak of God's foreknowledge, we must remember that the language is relative and finite. He is the timeless One, before whom all events lie open in one eternal now.

By the hand of lawless men] This is usually taken as indicating Pontius Pilate and the Roman soldiers as being aliens to the law of Moses (see margin), i.e., Gentiles (cf. Rom. ii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 21). The word, however, also carries in the New Testament the sense of 'law-breakers' or 'transgressors' (see Luke xxii. 37; 2 Thess. ii. 8; 1 Tim. i. 9; 2 Pet. ii. 8).

I beheld the Lord always before my face ;
 For he is on my right hand, that I should not be
 moved :

Did crucify] A verb peculiar to this one verse, and different from that used in v. 36. The preacher boldly arraigns his audience and accuses them of murdering the Christ whom God had publicly accredited.

24. Whom God raised up] All through his address, the apostle emphasizes the difference between God's treatment and man's treatment of Jesus Christ. 'Raised up'. See i. 22, note. St. Peter sounds forth clearly the Gospel of the resurrection.

Having loosed the pangs of death] The word 'pangs' means 'birth-pangs' and is found in Matt. xxiv. 8 ; 1 Thess. v. 3 (travail). The expression is taken from the LXX version of Ps. xviii. 5, which thus renders the Hebrew phrase 'the snares or cords of death.' We notice a paradox in the words 'the birth-pangs of death', and yet it represents an actual reality, for our Saviour's death and grave were only the prelude to His resurrection life. Death travailed in birth-throes till the dead was raised again.

It was not possible that He should be holden of it] It was 'not possible' in view of the divine purpose and promise (vv. 25-8), and in view of the fact that His atoning work must needs be consummated. If Christ were the Son of God and His sacrifice on Calvary efficacious, and if His victory over death were to be a reality, then the resurrection was an absolute necessity (Rom. i. 4 ; iv. 25 ; Heb. ii. 14, 15).

25. David saith] The verses are cited from Ps. xvi. 8-11, verbatim according to the LXX version. Part of the passage is quoted again in xiii. 35. St. Peter grounds his statements on the authority of holy writ.

Beheld] So the LXX renders the Hebrew 'set'. The force of the Greek (imperfect tense) is 'I continued looking in front of me at the Lord before my face'. It expresses Christ's constant fellowship with, and trust in, the Father all through His days on earth. His undiverted gaze was always directed to God the Father.

Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; 26
 Moreover my flesh also shall ^{1 Or, taber-} dwell in
 hope : _{nacle.}

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades; 27

On my right hand] Close beside as protector and helper. The Greeks were wont to speak of 'a side-by-side comrade' on the right hand, who in the battle covered with his shield the man on his left and so guarded him; and, in the courts of justice, the advocate was accustomed to stand on the right hand of his client in order to plead his cause. In Hebrew parlance, the phrase connoted strong succour (Ps. cix. 31; cx. 5; cxxi. 5; Isa. xli. 13; xlv. 1).

26. My tongue rejoiced] 'Exulted', as though leaping for joy. The Hebrew original of the Psalm has 'my glory', which is usually understood to be 'my soul'. The Septuagint, however, has interpreted it 'my tongue', possibly thinking of the connexion in Ps. cviii. 1. We remember how our Saviour sang praises even on the eve of His passion (Matt. xxvi. 30).

Shall dwell in hope] Literally, 'Shall tabernacle (or pitch its tent) upon hope'. Even in death and the grave Christ's mortal flesh encamped, so to speak, on the firm ground of hope, in the full assurance of a glorious resurrection. Hope was the ground or basis on which He rested, a hope which could not be disappointed. That hope is defined and explained in the verse which follows.

27. Leave] The word is strong, 'forsake' (See Matt. xxvii. 46; 2 Cor. iv. 9; Heb. xiii. 5). Christ, in the words of the Psalm, expresses His confidence that His soul will not be utterly abandoned to Hades and left there without glory and resurrection.

Hades] The New Testament equivalent of the Hebrew 'Sheol', the abode of departed spirits, the unseen world into which men pass after death. The word Hades probably means, in its derivation, 'the unseen'. Into this realm all men are transported at death, though the state of the saved and the unsaved there is entirely different.

Thy Holy One] The Hebrew word in the original Psalm means

Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou madest known unto me the ways of life :

<sup>1 Or, in thy
presence.</sup>

Thou shalt make me full of gladness ¹ with
thy countenance.

29 Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch

' a pious one ', ' a lover of God ', ' one united to Him by the bonds of affection '. The Greek word chosen to represent it in the LXX version, and repeated here, approximates in meaning to ' pious ', since it means not only ' holy ', but devout, religious, one who reverences and keeps the eternal laws of right and truth. It is used of our Lord again in Heb. vii. 26. The ordinary word for ' holy ' is quite a different one. It will be seen that this meaning, ' Thy pious, devoted one ', admirably suits the context (v. 25).

28. The ways of life] So the Septuagint. The Hebrew original has ' the path of life '. There can be little doubt that, in its application to our Lord, it means ' a path which issues in resurrection life '.

Thou shalt make me full of gladness, etc.] The Septuagint thus quoted, fairly gives the sense of the original Hebrew which reads ' (A satisfying) fulness of joy is with Thy countenance ' i.e., ' is produced by beholding Thy face '. This naturally refers here to the endless felicity which our risen Lord enjoys now in the Father's presence at the right hand of the majesty on high. Spiritually speaking, the Christian's resurrection life and joyous fellowship with God, which result from the Saviour's victory over death and sin, are promised and provided here and now (Rom. vi. 4, 11 ; 2 Cor. iii. 18).

29. Brethren] The apostle's mode of address becomes yet more affectionate (cf. vv. 14, 22), as he comes to closer quarters with his hearers and presses home the truth upon their consciences. He now proceeds to shew that the verse he has quoted cannot refer, in its full meaning, to David, but that it has been perfectly fulfilled in ' the son of David ', Jesus Christ. He can then claim their full allegiance for the exalted Lord.

David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and 30 knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins ^{1 Or, one should sit.} he would

Freely] Literally 'with boldness of speech'. The noun occurs again in iv. 13, 29, 31; and the corresponding verb in ix. 27, 29; xiii. 46; xiv. 3; xviii. 26; xix. 8; xxvi. 26. The constant recurrence of the word in the Acts shews that holy boldness in testimony is an essential to the faithful evangelist. And this courage in testimony is obtainable, even by the most timid, in fellowship with God (xiv. 3).

The patriarch David] The word 'patriarch' is found elsewhere in the New Testament only in chapter vii. 8, 9 of the tribal ancestors of the Israelites and in Heb. vii. 4 of Abraham. It means 'the father or chief of a race', and is applied here to David as the ancestor of the royal line in which the Christ was to be born.

Both died and was buried] And, therefore, the words of Ps. xvi. about not being left in Hades and not seeing corruption could not apply to him, but had reference to another.

His tomb is with us] David was buried in that part of Jerusalem which was known as 'the city of David' (1 Kings ii. 10; 2 Sam. v. 7; Neh. iii. 16). Josephus tells how his sepulchre was opened once and again to get the treasure known to have been buried in it. We are told, also, that the tombs of the house of David formed one of the wonders of Jerusalem. Peter could thus appeal to the tomb as a proof that David had seen corruption.

30. A prophet] Here the word is used in its more technical sense, 'one inspired to predict future events'.

God had sworn with an oath, etc.] The passage is quoted freely from Ps. cxxxii. 11. Compare also 2 Sam. vii. 16; Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, 35-7. God's promises to David pointed to a coming prince of unique glory, even the Messiah, 'the son of David'. Cf. Luke i. 32.

31 set *one* upon his throne; he foreseeing *this* spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left
 1 Or, of in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.
 32 ^{whom.} 2 Or at. This Jesus did God raise up, ¹ whereof we
 33 all are witnesses. Being therefore ² by the right hand

31. Foresee[ing] Literally 'Looking forward (into the future)', in prophetic vision.

Spake of the resurrection of the Christ] St. Peter's argument was clear, consecutive, and forcible. It ran as follows.

- (a) The words of Ps. xvi. about the resurrection refer definitely to someone.
- (b) They cannot denote David, for he died and saw corruption.
- (c) But, as all Jews acknowledged, the Messiah was promised as prince of the house of David.
- (d) The Psalm, therefore, refers to the Messiah.
- (e) Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead, and so He is the expected Messiah.

32. This Jesus] The words are emphatic, 'The very Jesus of Nazareth of whom I have been speaking (vv. 22-24) and whom ye crucified.'

Did God raise up] The verb corresponds to the noun 'resurrection' of v. 31. 'David spake of the raising up of the Christ. What then? God has raised up Jesus of Nazareth. He, then, is the Christ. Receive and obey Him.' Thus we see that the resurrection is the great fact upon which all hinges. See also i. 22 note.

Whereof we all are witnesses] See i. 8, 22. They could speak as eye-witnesses of the resurrection, and the strength of their preaching was thrown into a firm attestation of this central doctrine (x. 40, 41). They were prepared to lay down their lives, if need be, in evidence of their statements.

33. By the right hand of God exalted] The resurrection of Christ involved, and was followed by, His exaltation. According to our translation, the 'right hand of God' is regarded

of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into 34 the heavens : but he saith himself,

as the instrument by which the Saviour's exaltation was effected. It is possible, however (see margin), to render it 'exalted to the right hand of God', in which case we are to think of the position to which He has been raised. This rendering seems to be supported by v. 34. The 'right hand' is a Hebrew metaphor for the place of honour, power, and glory. The same expression meets us again in ch. v. 31, where the same double interpretation is possible.

Having received] See John xiv. 16, 26 ; xv. 26 ; ch. i. 4.

Poured forth] See v. 17. Thereby fulfilling Joel's prophecy.

This] As though to say 'This Holy Spirit', or 'this manifested power and energy'.

There was no way of accounting for what they 'saw and heard' except on the hypothesis of an exalted Saviour. St. Peter's statements explained the supernatural phenomena; no other supposition did. He now proceeds to prove from Scripture that such an exaltation of the Christ as he now proclaimed had been clearly predicted.

34. David ascended not] 'Great as David was, he neither rose again nor ascended; but he spake prophetically of one who would do so'. The arguments of this passage demand close attention here in India, where so many departed rishis and heroes are accorded divine honour and worship. Christianity alone, among all the religions of the world, points to a risen, living, and exalted Saviour as the 'reason why' of spiritual results.

He saith himself] In Ps. cx. 1. The quotation is taken verbally from the LXX. version. Only a short time before, our Lord had cited these very words to refute the Pharisees (Matt. xxii. 44). and some of St. Peter's hearers probably remembered the fact. We find the same verse referred to again in 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. i. 13; x. 13.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

36 Let ¹ all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly,
1 Or, every house. that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

My Lord] David, speaking in the Spirit, thus acknowledges the Christ as his master and ruler.

Sit thou on my right hand] Here the exaltation of the Christ is definitely announced. For 'right hand' see v. 33. The phrase implies a sharing of the Divine throne and government and power.

35. The footstool of thy feet] To plant the foot on the neck of a prostrate foe is a symbol of complete victory, See Joshua x. 24; 1 Sam. xvii. 51. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 24-27.

36. Assuredly] This word is very emphatic by position in the Greek. It occurs again twice only in the New Testament (Mark xiv. 44; Acts xvi. 23; safely). The force of it here is 'With perfect certainty, therefore, beyond all shadow of doubt, let all the house of Israel know.'

Both Lord and Christ] 'Lord', in accordance with the prophecy cited in v. 34, great David's greater son, seated on the throne of heaven and wielding the sceptre of omnipotence. And 'Christ', risen as shewn in v. 31, and living to fulfil His office as priest and king.

This Jesus whom ye crucified] The verse in the original marks strongly the contrast between the Father's honouring of Jesus Christ and their dishonouring of him. It may be paraphrased as follows. 'With full and perfect certainty, therefore, let the whole house of Israel know that God hath appointed Him both Lord and Christ; Him, I say, this selfsame Jesus whom ye, wicked sinners that ye are, crucified upon the cross of shame'. The apostle's address concludes by bringing them face to face with the heinousness of their sin in doing to the death the Christ of God, and also with the imminence of their danger in the light of the fact that He whom they had so fatally

Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their 37 heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter *said* unto 38 them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in

dishonoured was now wielding the sceptre of omnipotence and could punish them for their crime. The last words of his discourse must have sprung like an arrow to its mark, 'Ye crucified'. As Bengel says, 'There is a sting in the close.'

37-47. THE FIRST CONVERTS.

37. They were pricked] An unusual word, and peculiar in the New Testament to this one verse. It means 'to be sore pricked as by a sharp point', and points to the emotion of pain produced in their hearts by the apostle's words. Their consciences were stung to the quick by a sense of their sinfulness in having crucified the Christ. The Holy Ghost thus fulfilled the Saviour's promise, 'When He is come, He will convict the world in respect of sin' (John xvi. 8, 9). True conviction and contrition of this kind lead on to conversion.

What shall we do?] Cf. xvi. 30. When the conscience is awakened and the heart convicted, men cast about them for the way of salvation. With a rejected Christ upon the throne of power, the sinner's condition is one of solemn peril.

38. Repent] This word strikes the very first keynote of the Gospel (Matt. iii. 1, 2; iv. 17). The term 'repentance' denotes 'a change of mind and will' (involving also a change of conduct) with regard to sin. To 'repent', therefore, means, practically, to renounce sin and to turn in penitence to God. This must be followed by sincere faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and a glad acceptance of His atoning work, in order to salvation. To put the matter quite simply, repentance means the laying down of sin, and faith means the laying hold of Christ. These are the two great requirements of the Gospel (Mark. i. 15; Luke xxiv. 47; Acts xx. 21). The doctrine of repentance is repeatedly emphasized in the Acts of the Apostles (iii. 19; v. 31; viii. 22; xi. 18; xiii. 24; xvii. 30; xix. 4; xx. 21; xxvi. 20).

the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It should be noted that the verb here is in the aorist tense, implying an immediate and complete renunciation of sin. Obviously, the first thing for those convicted Jews to do was to forsake the sin of rejecting Christ and to turn in penitence and faith to Him.

Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ] Cf. viii. 16; xix. 4, 5. They were to be baptized, i.e., as the sign and token that they accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. Repentance, or the forsaking of sin, must be followed by the definite acceptance of Christ, and baptism is the divinely appointed sacrament in which such faith is publicly expressed (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16). While according to our Saviour's institution, baptism is administered in the name of the Trinity, yet when, as here, emphasis is placed on the acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord, it is specially spoken of as being 'in the name of Jesus Christ'. Indeed, that is the term usually employed in the New Testament (Acts viii. 16; x. 48; xix. 5; Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27; Cf. 1 Cor. i. 13. 14). As Waterland well puts it, 'The meaning is that the apostles baptized into the faith and religion of Christ, in that method and according to that form which our Lord Himself had prescribed.'

Unto the remission of your sins] This does not mean that the forgiveness of sins is conferred in a merely mechanical way by an external rite or ceremony, but that baptism is the sign or seal, to the faithful recipient, of that forgiveness of sins which is given to the true believer in Christ. As Article XXVII of the Church of England says, 'The promises of the forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed.'

And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost] The renunciation of sin and acceptance of Christ in the obedience of faith open the way, at once, to the great pentecostal endowment (see ch. v. 32; John vii. 37-39). The baptism of the Holy

For to you is the promise, and to your children, and **39** to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. And with many other words **40**

Ghost was not intended by God to be the prerogative of either apostles or an inner circle of Christian saints. It is the promise of the Father to all His believing and obedient children. It is for us as much as for the first disciples. See next verse.

Gift] The word so translated means 'a free gift,' and is always used in the Acts specifically of the Holy Spirit (viii. 20; x. 45; xi. 17. Cf. also John iv. 10; Heb. vi. 4).

39. For] Here is the ground for the preceding statement, 'Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, *for* God has pledged Himself to bestow that gift by His own sure word of promise.'

To you] This is spoken with emphasis, 'Ye are they in whom the promise is to be realized, if you will only obey God.' In the presentation of the Gospel and its privileges in the New Testament, the due order is always observed, 'To the Jew first, and also to the Greek' (Rom. i. 16).

The promise] That is, the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost (cf. i. 4).

To your children] Meaning, probably, 'to your posterity for all time to come' (cf. Gen. xvii. 7). It may, however, also point to the fact that the promises of the new covenant include the children of believers.

To all that are afar off] This is often explained as referring to the Jewish dispersion, the Jews, i.e., scattered in various distant lands; because, it is said, St. Peter had not yet learned God's full purposes of grace towards the Gentiles. The vision of chapter x. was necessary before he could accept such a wide extension of God's mercy. At the same time, we must remember that Christ's commission was to preach to 'all nations' (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15; Acts i. 8), and therefore we are scarcely justified in thinking that the Gentiles were not included in the apostle's words. Speaking by the

he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves
 41 ^{1 Or, having} from this crooked generation. They then
^{received.} ¹ that received his word were baptized: and

Holy Spirit, his words may have had an even fuller meaning than he himself contemplated at the time.

Shall call unto him] 'Call', i.e., by the preaching of the Gospel and the 'effectual call' of His grace.

40. With many other words] Only St. Peter's chief exhortations are recorded here. Clearly, from the context, he continued speaking for some time longer.

Testified] See note on i. 8. The verb is a compound one with the force of 'thorough and complete testimony' (found again in viii. 25; x. 42; xviii. 5; xx. 21, 23, 24; xxiii. 11; xxviii. 23); and the tense is aorist, speaking of accomplished witness, 'he witnessed thoroughly.' It may also, however, be rendered 'he charged them', as the verb sometimes bears that meaning.

And exhorted] Here the tense changes to the imperfect, 'He continued exhorting them', after he had finished his specific testimony or charge.

Save yourselves from] Literally 'Be ye saved from' (passive voice), i.e., by repentance and faith in Christ.

This crooked generation] The word 'crooked' (curved, bent and so unrighteous) is found again only in Luke iii. 5; Phil. ii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 18. It expresses the thought that the unregenerate world is 'crooked' and 'unrighteous' in the sight of God, deflected from a straight course and upright character by the fell force of sin.

41. They then that received his word] This may be translated also as in the margin 'They then having received, etc.' but the rendering of the text seems better. Not all those who *heard* the word *received* it.

Were baptized] This was according to Christ's command and institution (Matt. xxviii. 19). A good deal of controversy has been waged round this verse, as to the mode of baptism administered on the day of Pentecost. It is claimed, on the one hand, that,

there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and ¹ fellow-
1 Or, in
fellowship. 42

since the number of those baptized was so great and the supply of water within the walls of Jerusalem was scanty, baptism could not possibly have been by immersion. It is contended, on the other hand, that such difficulties were far from being insuperable and that no other mode of baptism was authorized or admissible. We may well confess our ignorance as to what actually took place, in this connexion, upon the day of Pentecost, but the contention that the Greek word 'baptize' always means 'immerse' is not borne out by Holy Scripture. For example, it is used in Mark vii. 4; Luke xi. 38 of pouring water over the limbs; in 1 Cor. x. 1-2 of the Israelites passing through the Red Sea where they were certainly not immersed; and in Acts i. 8 of the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the disciples. While, therefore, we may well acknowledge and prefer (as the Church of England does in her baptismal office rubrics) baptism by immersion, as being more fully symbolical of the spiritual resurrection of the believer (Rom. vi. 4-8; Col. ii. 12), we are not justified in regarding immersion as essential to the validity of baptism. This passage offers no encouragement to 'secret converts' in India, who, from fear of consequences, shrink from confessing Christ in baptism and seek to minimize the importance of that divinely appointed rite.

Added unto them] That is, 'added to' the existing company of believers.

About 3,000 souls] A Hebraism for '3,000 persons' (cf. vii. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 20). Thus the 'firstfruits' were gathered in and presented to the Lord on this great 'day of the firstfruits' (v. 1, note).

42. Continued steadfastly] See i. 14, where the same verb occurs, in the same tense.

The apostles teaching] Meaning, clearly, the instruction which the apostles gave to the new converts. This was in accordance

ship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done¹ by the

¹Or, *through*.
with Christ's specific injunction (Matt. xxviii. 19-20). The newcomers would have much to learn about the Saviour, His life and death and doctrine, and the apostles had been specially prepared by Him for this very work (Luke xxiv. 45-48; Acts i. 3). The instruction of the newly baptized is one of the most important parts of missionary work, and people often lapse into heathenism, etc., for want of just such teaching and spiritual help.

Fellowship] The text seems to connect the word with 'apostles', as though denoting the apostles' teaching and the apostles' fellowship, but the balance of clauses in the Greek hardly justifies this. The true sense appears to be better expressed by the margin 'and in (the) fellowship', i.e., fellowship with one another (including, of course, the apostles). The word is a comprehensive one in the New Testament, being used not only of brotherly association, but also of joint participation in spiritual blessings and of the communication or distribution of earthly goods. The verses which follow throw light on the meaning.

In the breaking of bread] The same expression is found in Luke xxiv. 35, where it refers to the evening meal at Emmaus, with (possibly) the symbolical act which accompanied that meal (v. 30) Cf. Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19. We read of the custom again in Acts ii. 46; xx. 7, 11. In the days of the infant Church, and throughout the apostolic age, the evening meal of Christians was united with the 'Lord's Supper' or solemn 'breaking of bread' usually concluding with it after the manner of the original institution. These united evening meals, associated with the 'Lord's Supper', were known as 'Agapae' or 'Feasts of Love'. It is, almost certainly, such a commemorative 'breaking of bread', following a common evening meal, which is here referred to.

And the prayers] This is explained by some as denoting united 'prayers' at the Christian gatherings, including, probably, psalm^s

apostles¹. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted

¹ Many ancient authorities add in Jerusalem: and great fear was upon all. 44
45

and customary Jewish prayers, with new Christian prayers (e.g. the Lord's Prayer). Those who so regard it claim to find here the beginnings of a distinctive Christian 'liturgy'. Others, again, consider that the phrase relates to the ordinary temple worship (v. 46), which the Christians continued to attend (iii. 1). We cannot, however, state certainly that it means anything more than 'they continued in united prayer'.

43. Fear came upon every soul] See ch. v. 5, 11; xix. 17. The strange phenomena of Pentecost, with the conversions which followed, caused a feeling of awe among all the people. This was further enhanced by what follows next.

Wonders and signs] See v. 22. It refers, of course, to the working of miracles.

44. All that believed] There is emphasis on the 'all'. See v. 1, note. What characterized that united company was faith in Christ.

Were together] See v. 1, where the same expression is translated 'in one place'. Probably some of the three thousand were from distant places and returned to their own homes after the day of Pentecost. The believers remaining in Jerusalem held close together, bound by a common faith and a common cause.

Had all things common] There was a community of goods (see iv. 32--35) on an entirely voluntary basis (ch. v. 4; xii. 12). Mutual love and assistance characterized this 'society of brethren'. While, however, our minds linger with pleasure on this ideal picture of social equality and community, we can hardly claim that it was intended to be a permanent institution, for we do not find it reproduced in the other churches founded by the apostles.

45. Sold, parted] These verbs are in the imperfect tense, 'they kept selling and parting' from time to time, as necessity arose.

them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple,

Possessions] The word employed means, specially, 'real, immovable, or landed property'. It is interesting to notice that it is used three times only in the New Testament.

(a) Of the rich ruler, unwilling to part with his landed possessions. Matt. xix. 22; Mark x. 22.

(b) Of the Christians of Pentecost, willingly parting with them. Acts ii. 45.

(c) Of false Christians, most reluctant to part with them. Acts v. 1.

Goods] Indicating, specially, 'personal or movable' as distinguished from 'real property'; or, as we may say, 'other goods in general'. Here again, it is interesting to note that the word only occurs again in Heb. x. 34, of the 'better possessions' for the sake of which the Christians there addressed took joyfully the spoiling of their earthly goods.

As any man had need] This suggests that the sales and distributions in question were occasional only, according to actual necessity.

46. Continued steadfastly] The same verb as in i. 14; ii. 42. It speaks of persistent practice.

With one accord] The same word as in i. 14 which see.

In the temple] They continued to resort thither at the Jewish hours of prayer (iii. 1). Their Master had claimed it as His Father's house (John ii. 16) and had often gone there for worship and teaching. It was natural for His followers to do the same, in the absence of any direct prohibition. All their religious ideas, as Jews, were centred there; and there, too, they found special opportunities for making known the Gospel (ch. v. 19-21). It required time and special divine intimations to shew that there must be a clear and final separation between Judaism and Christianity. We have here, let it be noticed, another link with the third Gospel (Luke xxiv. 53).

Breaking bread at home] This probably refers, though not certainly, to the concluding part of the united 'Feasts of Love'

and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, 47 and having favour with all the people. And the Lord

alluded to in v. 42. It was not in the temple but in their own homes that they gathered for those united meals, in connexion with which they commemorated the 'Lord's Supper'. How naturally those early Christians passed from the secular to the sacred.

Did take their food] The close connexion of this with the preceding shews that the 'Lord's Supper' formed, so to speak, a part, the most sacred and solemn part, of their ordinary meal. The imperfect tense of the verb tells of a customary practice.

Gladness] The noun corresponding with the verb 'rejoiced' which we met with in v. 26. It means 'exulting gladness'. The joy of God's salvation filled their hearts and beautified their lives.

Singleness] A word peculiar to this passage. It means true 'simplicity', like the evenness of ground without rough stones in it. There were no stones of unbelief and selfishness in their hearts, and so, with true candour of spirit, and honesty of purpose, as well as with triumphant gladness, they could commemorate their Master's death and resurrection, and praise God for His goodness.

47. Praising God] These Christians of Pentecost were joyful, praising Christians. A 'new song' filled their mouth and their hearts overflowed in thanksgiving. See Introduction VI. 9. The expression is characteristic of St. Luke (Luke ii. 13, 20; xix 37; Acts iii. 8, 9.)

Having favour] Their faith and conduct commended them to all men. The opposition which came later was due to the hierarchy who promoted it from motives of self-interest (iv. 1, 2). True piety wins respect from all right-minded men, and nowhere more so than in India.

The Lord] That is, 'the ascended Christ' (v. 36).

^{1 Gr. to-} added ¹ to them day by day those that were
^{gether.} being saved.

Added] Imperfect tense 'kept adding'.

To them] As the margin shews, the Greek has 'together', the same phrase as we met with in v. 1 (in one place) and in v. 44. It serves to emphasize the unity of the Christian society. 'All that believed were together', and 'the Lord kept on adding' more believers 'together'.

Day by day] The same expression as in v. 46. As they did their part 'day by day', so the Lord did His part also 'day by day'.

Those that were being saved] The tense of the verb (present participle) speaks of salvation as a continued process. While, as regards the believer's *justification*, salvation is an accomplished fact (Eph. ii. 5); and as regards his *glorification*, it is a future consummation to be attained when our Lord returns (Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Pet. i. 5); as regards his *sanctification*, it is a present and progressive process.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER II

1. *Principal divisions.* The chapter shews us, in a useful outline study,
 - (1) Christ's witnesses endued with power, vv. 1-13.
 - (2) " " emboldened for testimony, vv. 14-36.
 - (3) " " encouraged by results, vv. 37-47.
2. *Prominent topics.*
 - (1) A pattern for evangelistic sermons (addressed to those who knew the Scriptures).
 It (i) Is based entirely on Holy Scripture, vv. 16-21, 25-8, 34-5.
(An interweaving together of Bible texts).
(ii) Points exclusively to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

{	Christ accredited.	v. 22.
	,, crucified,	vv. 23, 36.
	,, risen,	vv. 24-32.
	,, exalted,	vv. 33-6.

 (Full all through of 'Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ'.)
(iii) Arraigns boldly the sin of the hearers, vv. 22-3, 36.

Now Peter and John were going up into the temple 1 at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth hour. And a 2

(iv) Leads up to true and deep conviction, vv. 36-7.

(Bringing them face to face with a rejected but exalted Christ).

(v) Presses for an immediate decision, vv. 21, 38-40.

(2) A pattern for true and real converts.

(i) Pricked deeply in their heart, v. 37. Conviction.

(ii) Receiving the Gospel and acting on it. v. 41. Conversion.

(iii) Continuing consistently in Church fellowship. Communion, v. 42.

(iv) Sharing their possessions with others, v. 44. Copartnership.

(v) Persisting in worship, gratitude, and service. Consecration. vv. 46-7.

(3) The Holy Spirit's work in the world.

To convict (i) Of sin, vv. 23, 36-7; John xvi. 9.

(ii) Of righteousness, vv. 22, 24, 32-6; John xiv. 10.

(iii) Of judgment, vv. 34-5; John xvi. 11.

CHAPTER III

1-10. THE LAME MAN HEALED

1. **Peter and John]** They were the leading spirits among the apostles and formed an admirable combination of strenuous activity and thoughtful love. They had long been close friends and partners (Luke v. 10; xxii. 8; Jhon xx. 3, 4). We shall find them associated again in iv. 13; viii. 14.

The hour of prayer] The Jews are said to have observed three stated 'hours of prayer', probably based on Ps. Iv. 17; Dan. vi. 10. These were the 'third hour' (ii. 15) the 'sixth hour' (x. 9), and the 'ninth hour'. We may learn a lesson from the apostles of diligence in the use of the appointed means of grace. Stated 'hours of prayer' are familiar to all dwellers in the east. The Muhammadans, like the Zoroastrians, observe five such periods of prayer every day; and the orthodox Hindus are careful to perform their prescribed devotions at sunrise and sunset.

certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them

The ninth hour] That is about 3 p.m. (see note on ii. 15), midway between noon and sunset. Sometimes, of course, it would be later, according to the length of duration of daylight. The 'ninth hour' was the time for offering the evening sacrifice in the temple. We may notice that several references to the ninth hour occur in the New Testament. It was

- (a) The hour when some of the late labourers were hired for the vineyard (Matt. xx. 5).
- (b) The hour when our Saviour cried out in anguish on the cross (Matt. xxvii. 45--46).
- (c) The hour when the lame man was healed at the temple (here).
- (d) The hour when Cornelius saw his memorable vision (x. 3, 30).

2. Lame from his mother's womb] This careful statement is characteristic of St. Luke, and shews the observant faculty of the physician. Similarly, he records the patient's age (iv. 22). Though we have scattered notices in the Gospels of the healing of the lame, the only specific instances of such healing both occur in the Acts, the one here and the other in chapter xiv. The fact that this man was born lame, and so had limbs which were atrophied, enhances the force of the miracle, besides rendering it a fitter emblem of spiritual things.

Was carried] The tense is the imperfect, 'was being carried'. This may be taken, of course, to mean that he was regularly carried there every day. It may, however, also be regarded as implying that the man was being carried at that special time. Just as the apostles 'were going up' (v. 1) into the temple this lame man 'was being carried' thither, a coincidence in time more than accidental. If so, we see God meeting man's need just at the right moment with His supply of grace.

Whom they laid daily] This verb, also in the imperfect tense

that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and 3 John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with 4

clearly denotes the daily repetition of the act, 'whom they were in the habit of laying daily'.

At the door of the temple which is called Beautiful] We do not meet with this name elsewhere, and so it is difficult to identify the door in question. The most probable conjecture is that it is identical with the gate of Herod's temple which was known as 'the gate Nicanor'. This was on the east side of the 'Court of the Israelites' and was reached by a flight of fourteen or fifteen steps from the 'Court of the Women'. In other words, it was the main entrance from the east into the innermost court. All the temple gates to this innermost court had folding doors, covered with gold and silver; but Josephus tells us that this one was much larger than the rest, being fifty cubits high and forty cubits broad. It was made of Corinthian brass, 'adorned after a most costly manner' with thicker and richer plates of gold than the other gates. Others have supposed the 'beautiful' gate or door to be the gate 'Shushan' (lily), which appears to have been on the east of the 'Court of the Women'; through it ingress was had from the 'Court of the Gentiles'. There is however considerable uncertainty as to its exact locality. Josephus's description of the more handsome of the gates has been appropriated to this gate 'Shushan', erroneously, as it would seem.

To ask alms] We are accustomed in India to see mendicants sitting or lying to beg alms just outside churches, mosques, and temples. They naturally suppose that people are most inclined to dispense charity when their religious emotions are stirred.

The Greek word for 'alms' denotes originally 'pity' or 'mercy', and then, by a derived meaning, 'the expression or outcome of mercy in the form of charitable gifts'. It is in the singular number.

4. Fastening his eyes] The same verb as in i. 10, which see. Probably Peter read the man's character and discerned his potential faith (see xiv. 9, where the same verb occurs).

5 John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter 6 said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have,

Look on us] This was in order to arrest the man's attention and excite his desires. Here were no ordinary alms-givers. Let him prepare for something extraordinary.

5. He gave heed to them, expecting] The force of the Greek is, 'He held or directed (his mind) toward them', and kept it fixed there. The attitude of expectation is essential to those who seek God's grace and gifts. This verb is found again in the Acts in x. 24; xxvii. 33; xxviii. 6. We have thus three interesting examples of eager expectation.

(a) The beggar expecting to receive help. iii. 5.

(b) The inquirer expecting to hear the Gospel. x. 24.

(c) The voyagers expecting to see the dawn. xxvii. 33.

To receive something] He looked for a poor pittance of alms, and received health of body and salvation of soul. God's gracious gifts far transcend our poor expectation. It is unbelief which limits Him (Mark vi. 5, 6).

6. Silver and gold have I none] We mark at once the unworldliness and unselfishness of these Christian teachers. They had not profited personally by the distribution of goods in the community (ii. 45). Here is a pattern for all engaged in the work of the Gospel. We note, too, that the power of the rupee played no part in the first promulgation of Christianity. The power of the Holy Ghost was what those early preachers relied upon. May we not learn, also, from this verse that it is better to say honestly that we cannot give money to charities than to go into debt in order to appear charitable?

What I have] The possession of grace and spiritual gifts is better far than all earth's silver and gold. See 2 Cor. vi. 10. Peter and John were really 'rich' indeed, for they had the 'riches of grace' at their disposal.

In the name of] Meaning 'By virtue of the authority and power of'. The 'name' stands for the revealed nature, character,

that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his

office, and authority. It is as though St. Peter said, 'because of what Jesus Christ is, and by virtue of His character, authority, and power, rise up and walk'. The word 'name', in the sense of revealed character and accredited authority, occurs in the Acts some thirty-four times in all, and the expression 'in the name of' is found again in, ii. 38; iv. 10; ix. 27, 29; x. 48; xvi. 18. We may compare Mark xvi. 17-18.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth] The apostle adds 'Christ' now to the title which he had employed upon the day of Pentecost (ii. 22). He had proved Him conclusively to be the Christ (ii. 36) and may therefore speak boldly of 'Jesus, the Messiah, the Nazarene'. To Jewish ears the combination must have sounded strange indeed (John i. 46; vii. 52; xix. 19). St. Peter loves to emphasize the fact that it was the despised Nazarene who wrought such marvels (ii. 22; iv. 10). May we not add that, while the name of Jesus speaks of saving help, and Christ of official power, the word Nazarene breathes with human sympathy?

Walk] One short word of command, sublime in its simplicity. 'Where the word of a king is, there is power' (Eccl. viii. 4; Ps. xxxiii. 9). Cf. Mark i. 31; ix. 27; Luke viii. 54.

7. Took him by the right hand] The action speaks of human sympathy and help. The power was Christ's, but the hand was Peter's. We, too, may help to raise our fallen brothers, as we work in love and sympathy, depending on the power of Christ.

Immediately] A word peculiar to St. Luke, with the exception of Matt. xxi. 19, 20, 'at once', 'on the spot'. It occurs again in the Acts in v. 10; ix. 18; xii. 23; xiii. 11; xvi. 26, 33, and is found ten times in the third Gospel. It is used in medical language of the prompt effects produced by remedies. Christ's miracles of healing were all characterized by the features of immediateness and completeness. They cannot, therefore, be ascribed to natural causes.

8 ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

His feet and ankle-bones] The former of these two nouns means, literally, 'the soles of the feet', on which man steps. Both that and the following noun 'ankle-bones' are peculiar to this one passage in the New Testament, and both are of a technical character and accord with the professional knowledge of the writer as a physician (see *Introd.*, p. xiv).

Received strength] Literally 'were strengthened', so as to perform their proper functions. The verb is peculiar to the Acts, and occurs again only in v. 16 and xvi. 5. It is thus used only of being 'strengthened in the feet' and of being 'strengthened in the faith'. It was often employed in medical language.

8. Leaping up] Cf. Isa. xxxv. 6. There was no slow and painful rising, but an immediate 'springing up' in the joyful alacrity of faith, as divine power came upon him. Cf. xiv. 10, where, however, a different word is used.

Stood] 'Stood', he is remembered, for the first time in his life.

Began to walk] The tense (imperfect) may be thus rendered. We may, however, translate 'He kept on walking', although, as Bengel quaintly remarks, 'he had never learned how to walk'. The variation in the tenses of the verbs (present, aorist, imperfect) makes the scene most graphic, and suggests that the account must have come from an eye-witness.

Entered with them into the temple] Doubtless, he wished to shew both attachment to his benefactors and gratitude to God for His great mercy.

Walking and leaping] After forty years of lameness, no wonder that he used his new-found limbs so vigorously, in the very exuberance of his joy. Looking on the miracle as a 'sign' of heavenly things, the marvel is that men who receive spiritual strength and healing are so apathetic and lacking in enthusiasm.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God: **9** and they took knowledge of him, that it was he which **10** 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.

And praising God] This man, at least, did not forget to give thanks to God. It is the same expression as occurred in ii. 47. We may notice a sort of progression and climax in his actions; 'standing' (health); 'walking' (vigour); 'leaping' (exuberance); 'praising God' (joy and gladness). The whole passage is most vivid and circumstantial, contrasting greatly in this respect with the parallel account of healing in xiv. 8-10, which is comparatively bald. The difference in style suggests a difference in the sources from which St. Luke derived his information and illustrates his faithfulness in the use of authentic material.

9. All the people] As it was the hour of the evening sacrifice (v. 1), many would be present in the temple.

10. They took knowledge of him] Cf. iv. 13. More simply, 'they kept recognizing him'. One by one of those who had seen him before began to recognize the quondam cripple. The knowledge here referred to is the knowledge of recognition.

Wonder] The word means more than 'wonder', and may be rendered 'amazement', as in Luke iv. 36; v. 9, the only other passages in which it occurs. It is thus peculiar to St. Luke, and another little proof of his authorship. †

Amazement] This may be translated 'astonishment' (as in Mark xvi. 8), or 'entrancement'. It denotes a great disturbance or distraction of mind arising from wonder or terror. It occurs again three times in the Acts (x. 10; xi. 5; xxii. 17), and is rendered 'trance'. It is cognate with the verb 'to be amazed' which we met with in ii. 7, which see.

- 11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the ¹porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And ^{10r, portico.}
 12 when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye

11-26. PETER'S DISCOURSE IN SOLOMON'S PORCH

11. As he held] The Greek is very graphic. We can see the man, in his gratitude and joy, 'holding fast', 'clinging to' Peter and John.

The Bezan or Western text (i. 2 footnote) reads—'As Peter and John were going out, he went out with them and laid hold of them; and they, full of amazement, took their stand in Solomon's porch'.

All the people ran together] It does not take long for a crowd to collect, especially in an eastern land. And here there was good reason for such a concurrence. One of the main purposes of the miracles recorded in the Acts was to attract the attention of men to the Gospel.

The porch that is called Solomon's] The outer court of the temple, 'the Court of the Gentiles', was surrounded by porticoes, of which those on the north, west, and east formed double cloisters, with two rows of white marble monolithic columns supporting a roof of carved cedar. Of these porticoes or cloisters, that on the east, as Josephus tells us, was called 'Solomon's porch'. He attributes it to the time of Solomon, but we are rather to understand that it was the work of Herod, the name of Solomon being attached to it for traditional reasons unknown to us. It was a place of common resort for frequenters of the temple, and it is interesting to remember that our Lord delivered there His beautiful discourse about the Good Shepherd (John x. 23). The 'sheep of His pasture' are now going to use it as a place of gathering (ch. v. 12).

Greatly wondering] The same word which occurred in v. 10 'wonder', but with a prefix attached to intensify its force, Render 'exceedingly amazed'. Their amazement increased, rather than diminished.

men of Israel, why marvel ye at this 'man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, 13

Or, thing.

12. Answered] 'Answered', that is, not their spoken questions, but their surprise and thoughts and inward questionings. Cf. ch. v. 8; viii. 34; x. 46.

Men of Israel] See ii. 22; xiii. 16. A courteous mode of address, emphasizing their national privileges. The missionary and evangelist do well to follow the apostolic example of kindly courtesy in preaching to non-Christians.

At this man] This translation has regard to the fact that the verse goes on to speak about him, namely, the lame man. Others prefer to treat the pronoun as neuter 'at this thing' (see margin), referring it back to v. 10 'that which had happened unto him'.

Fasten ye your eyes] See i. 10; iii. 4, where the verb has already occurred.

On us] This is said emphatically. 'On us why do ye fix your gaze, as though we were anything?'

As though by our own power,] The people were regarding them as possessed of miraculous powers owing to their special sanctity. So, in India, rishis and devotees have from time immemorial been credited with the power of doing marvels, and their word is regarded as being potential for good and evil. The mahātmas of the Buddhists are similarly esteemed. These Christian apostles are careful to divert attention from themselves to their Lord and Master, and to repudiate the idea of thaumaturgic power arising from human merit.

13. The God of Abraham, etc.] St. Peter would shew that, as a witness of the Lord Jesus, he is in true continuity with the past of his nation. He uses the title of God which was held in such peculiar honour among the Jews. The very designation, too, served to convince them of the greatness of their sin, which, as he proceeds to point out, was really rebellion against the 'God of their fathers'.

and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his ¹Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But ye

1 Or, child: and so in ver. 26: iv. 27, 30. See Matt. xii. 18. Isa. xlii. 1: lii. 13: lii. 11.

His Servant Jesus] The word 'servant' is a designation of the Messiah, as found in Isa. xlii. 1-4 and following chapters (cf. Matt. xii. 17-21). This special usage of the word is peculiar to the Acts (v. 26; iv. 27, 30). It implies the teaching about the sufferings of Christ as contained in Is. chs. l-lxiii., where the 'Servant of the Lord' is spoken of. He was to be God's 'salvation unto the ends of the earth'. In Him were perfectly exemplified all those attributes of obedience, devotion, earnestness, and diligence which go to make up ideal service.

Whom ye] The 'ye' is emphatic. 'The God of our fathers glorified Him; but ye, presumptuous sinners, denied and slew Him.'

Denied] 'Denied', that is, His claims as the Servant of the Lord, the promised Messiah (Luke xxiii. 2, 18; John xix. 14-15).

Pilate] Pontius Pilate was the fifth Roman procurator of Judaea, which he administered from A.D. 26 for ten years. He was then recalled to Rome to answer complaints brought against him by the Samaritans, and forthwith disappears from authentic history. His part in the condemnation of our Saviour is sufficiently narrated in the four Gospels.

When he had determined to release Him] See Luke xxiii. 13-16; John xix. 12. The Gospel history shews clearly that, but for his fear of the people, Pilate would have set Christ at liberty. This fact is used by Peter to convince his hearers of the enormity of their sin.

14. **But ye]** The pronoun is still more emphatic than before. 'Even Pilate wished to release Him; but ye, persisting in your treason, denied and crucified Him.' Notice the repetition of the verb 'denied', as though the preacher would fain write it on their hearts. Was there any thought, as he spoke, of his own former denial of the Master of which he had so deeply repented?

denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the ¹ Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; ² whereof we are witnesses. And

¹ Or, *Author*.

² Or, *of whom*.

15

16

The Holy and Righteous One] He had been recognized and acknowledged as the 'Holy One' even by demons (Luke iv. 34); and as the 'Righteous One' even by pagans (Matt. xxvii. 19; Luke xxiii. 47); while 'His own' people had 'denied' and rejected Him. Cf. also Isa. liii. 11. Holiness speaks more especially of consecration to God's service, and righteousness of integrity of character and conduct.

Asked for a murderer] The antithesis is very marked in the Greek. Over against 'ye denied' we have 'ye asked for'; and, as against the 'Holy and Righteous One', we have 'a murderer'. Stated thus, the sin stands out in its true light. The murderer in question is, of course, Barabbas (Mark xv. 7; Luke xxiii. 18, 19).

15. Killed] 'Ye asked for a murderer to be released; more than that, ye became murderers yourselves'.

There is almost a paradox involved in the phrase 'Ye killed the Prince of life', and yet it is a fact terribly true.

The Prince] The word 'Prince' means also 'Author' (see margin), or 'Originator'. It thus combines the ideas of originating and governing. It occurs only four times in the New Testament. Christ is

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) | The author and ruler of life | .. Acts iii. 15. |
| (b) | " " " " | salvation .. Acts v. 31; |
| | | Heb. ii. 10. |
| (c) | " " " " | faith .. Heb. xii. 2. |

Raised from the dead] Once more the clear note of the resurrection is struck. See i. 22; ii. 24, 32.

We are witnesses] See ii. 32. The fact is here repeated. Both there and here we may also render 'Of whom we are witnesses' (see margin). Cf. i. 8.

¹ by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him

¹ Or, on the ground of.

16. By faith in His name] Here faith is represented, according to the reading of the Greek, either as the *instrument* (or occasion) of the healing; or as the *ground* (see margin) on which that healing depended. And the faith in question was trust in the 'name', i.e., the character and authority, of Christ. The healing was conditioned, and also received, by faith. The mere using of the name of Jesus Christ like a charm or incantation, as Hindus often use the names of their deities, would be vain and useless. And even His power and authority will not avail for man's blessing apart from sincere faith on the part of the recipient. We see from this verse that not only Peter and John (v. 6), but the lame man also must have exercised true faith in the Saviour's power and grace.

Hath His name] That is, practically, 'His power and grace'. The name stands for the Person, with all His resources and authority. There is emphasis on these words. 'His name' was the real and effective cause of the result.

Made strong] The same verb as in v. 7.

Whom ye behold and know] The force is, 'You behold him and so see that he is now completely healed. You know and have known him and so are aware what he was. The miracle then is undeniable'.

The faith which is through Him] This faith, which is alike the condition and the instrumental cause of the reception of God's grace, is itself a divine gift. It is bestowed through Christ, as medium and channel. Thus both the boon and the faith which claims it come to men as free gifts from and through the glorified Lord. Cf. Eph. ii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 21; Heb. xii. 2.

Perfect soundness] One word, a compound, in the Greek. It means 'wholeness and entireness in all parts', 'perfect completeness'. The noun is peculiar to this verse, but the corresponding adjective is found in 1 Thess. v. 23; Jas. i. 4, where it

this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye did it, 17 as did also your rulers. But the things which God 18 foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his

is rendered 'entire'. The word is thus Paulo-Lukan. 'The man's 'perfect soundness' was evidenced by his walking and leaping.

17. Brethren] As in ii. 29, the apostle drops the more formal mode of address (v. 12) when he proceeds to press home their sin upon them and to urge them to repentance. Special tenderness marks the personal application of his sermon.

I wot] An old English word meaning 'I know'.

In ignorance] A noun found again in xvii. 30; Eph. iv. 18; 1 Pet. i. 14. They did not know that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and so they crucified Him (Luke xxiii. 34). Such ignorance was culpable, and the apostle is not in any way condoning their guilt. They ought to have known Him to be the Messiah. One day the Jewish nation will awake to the fact that it slew, in ignorance, its 'First-born', the great Messiah, and then there will be a bitter weeping and wailing over their sin (Zech. xii. 10-14).

Your rulers] That is, the chief priest and Sanhedrin.

18. Foreshewed] A verb only found again in the New Testament in vii. 52. It means 'to announce beforehand'.

By the mouth of all the prophets] Peter had been in the school of the risen Christ (Luke xxiv. 44-8). With such a teacher, the prophetic Scriptures had become to him an open book.

That His Christ should suffer] He who thus spake was the very Peter who had once rebelled against the thought of a suffering Messiah (Matt. xvi. 21-3); but Calvary, interpreted by the resurrection, had altered all that, and now he glories in the truth which he had formerly despised. His first Epistle has the word 'suffering' for its keynote.

19 Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the

He thus fulfilled] With some stress on the 'thus'. God overruled even their ignorance and crime for the accomplishment of His purposes.

19. Repent ye therefore] The very challenge which he had already flung down to them on the day of Pentecost (ii. 38). This was the first message of the Holy Spirit to sinful men after His coming in power, and it is His primary message still. To renounce and forsake the guilt which grieves and offends God is the first step towards salvation.

Turn again] The selfsame word which the Saviour Himself had addressed to Peter in view of his sin and fall (Luke xxii. 32). The apostle uses it again in 1 Pet. ii. 25. Clearly, it had left a deep impression on his memory. Here it means 'turn yourselves from your sin to God your Saviour'. It denotes the action which results in the change of mind indicated by repentance. It occurs, in this sense, frequently in the Acts (ix. 35; xi. 21; xiv. 15; xv. 19; xxvi. 18, 20; xxviii. 27).

That your sins may be blotted out] Cf. Ps. li. 9; Isa. xlili. 25; xlv. 22. The result of turning from sin to the Saviour is that our sins are erased, like the obliteration of handwriting, etc. This verb, meaning 'to wipe out' is found also in Col. ii. 14; Rev. iii. 5; vii. 17; xxi. 4. We see, on comparing these verses, that God 'wipes out' or 'wipes away', for the believer:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| (a) His sins | .. Acts iii. 19 (cf. ii. 38). |
| (b) His condemnation | .. Col. ii. 14. |
| (c) His tears | .. Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 4. |

So that there may come] The forgiveness of sins is not the 'end all' of conversion. It is followed by greater blessings still. When sin has been removed, a way is opened for God's power and grace to be fully exercised in the soul.

Seasons of refreshing] The expression probably looks on ultimately to the time when Christ shall come again and when

presence of the Lord ; and that he may send the Christ **20** who hath been appointed for you, *even Jesus* : whom **21** the heaven must receive until the times of restoration

those Messianic promises which still remain unfulfilled shall be perfectly consummated (e.g. Isa. xi. 6-10 ; xxxv. 1-10). That will be the golden age of blessing for the Jewish nation, and, through them, a period of spiritual quickening to the world at large (Romans xi. 11-36). But, inasmuch as 'the times of restoration of all things' (v. 21) are contradistinguished in the context from the 'seasons of refreshing', we may infer that the latter are distinctly prior in time, and indicate experiences of grace and blessing in this present dispensation, to be finally consummated at the second advent. The word 'refreshing' is peculiar to this verse, and may also be rendered 'revival' or 'reviving'. The corresponding verb is found only in 2 Tim. i. 16. The phrase 'seasons of refreshing', therefore, includes the idea of 'special times of spiritual quickening and revival', such as God vouchsafes to those who 'follow on to know the Lord', Pentecost being the beginning and the pledge of them. The word 'season' is the same as occurred in i. 7.

20. And that He may send the Christ] The second coming of Christ is the glorious hope of all believers, and ushers in the period of consummation of all things. The apostles and their companions lived ever in the glow of that hope and in the expectation of their Saviour's speedy appearing (Phil. iii. 20, 21 ; Tit. ii. 13 ; Heb. ix. 28 ; x. 37 ; Jas. v. 8 ; 1 Pet. i. 7, 8 ; 1 John iii. 2, 3). The work of salvation will then be completed in the 'redemption of the body', and our Lord will take to Himself His power and reign. Thus we see that the 'seasons of refreshing', in the sequence of the context, precede the actual return of Christ, shewing that they have to do with this present dispensation. Special 'revival' hastens on, so to speak, the second advent. The epiphany of Christ will usher in special blessings for the Jews, and so the apostle's words had a peculiar interest for them (see v. 25).

Who hath been appointed for you] The verb is a somewhat rare one, and means first 'to take in hand', and then 'to

of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began.

22 Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise

appoint or choose'. It occurs again in the New Testament only in Acts xxii. 14; xxvi. 16. We see, on comparing these verses, that just as Christ is chosen and appointed as Saviour and Lord, so also the Christian is chosen and appointed to know and serve Him.

Even Jesus] This stands suggestively and emphatically at the end of the sentence. Jesus of Nazareth, and none other, is the appointed Messiah and coming King. He who died on the cross is destined to wear the crown.

21. Must receive] The tense of the verb denotes completed action. It was necessary for the heavens to receive Him once for all, till His second advent.

The times of restoration of all things] The word 'times', like the word 'seasons', takes us back to i. 7, which see. The age in view here is, undoubtedly, that which will be ushered in by our Lord's return. It may include several periods of development, and hence the plural 'times'. Then will the Church be 'caught up' to meet her Lord (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17); 'all Israel shall be saved' (Rom. xi. 26); the whole creation shall be delivered from 'the bondage of corruption' (Rom. viii. 19-21); there shall be 'new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness' (2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1-5); and the mediatorial kingdom of Christ will be delivered up to God the Father, so that 'God may be all in all' (1 Cor. xv. 28). Thus shall that equilibrium be perfectly and finally restored which has been so terribly disturbed by sin. It is interesting to remember that Hinduism, in some of its aspects, anticipates a period of prosperity for the world in the distant future; as also to remember that Islām looks for the descent of Jesus Christ from heaven, though it misunderstands the purpose of His advent. It is, however, rather to a recurring cycle that Hinduism points its votaries—a time of comparative happiness to be followed again by fresh misery and so on 'ad infinitum'—than

up unto you from among your brethren, ¹ like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And ^{1 Or, as he raised up me.} 23

to an assured and glorious end. We may compare, for the expression of this verse, the phrase 'the regeneration' (Matt. xix. 28).

Whereof God spake] According to the Greek construction, this refers to 'the times'. God is definitely claimed to be the speaker in holy writ. This means inspiration of the most definite type. See i. 16.

By the mouth of His holy prophets] Once more we are taken back to our Lord's clear instructions to His disciples after the resurrection (Luke xxiv. 45). They learned from His lips the real meaning of the prophetic writings. St. Peter is very definite on the subject of second advent doctrine (see 2 Pet. i. 19-21). That God spake by the prophets about the 'times of restoration of all things' is abundantly evidenced by such passages as Isa. chs. xi, xxv, xxxv, lx; Jer. xxxi; Ezek. xxxvi; Joel ii, iii; Mic. v; Zech. xii—xiv, etc.

22. Moses indeed said] The preacher now, apparently, leaves the thought of the future and final consummation of all things, and returns to the present dispensation (these days, v. 24), in order to bring the matter to an immediate and practical issue. In the original, Moses (v. 22) and Samuel (v. 24) are correlated. The quotation is a free one, taken from Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19, after the Septuagint. We notice, in passing, that the Book of Deuteronomy is specially attributed to Moses, and that its inspiration and authority are presupposed in the preceding words 'God spake'.

A prophet] The prophecy of Deut. xviii is here applied definitely to our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone fulfils its statements. In India, and other Muslim lands, the Muhammadans of these days endeavour to appropriate this prophecy to the person of their own prophet, partly on the ground that the expression 'from among your brethren' being spoken to the Israelites, must denote, it is said, the race of Ishmael, their brethren

it shall be, that every soul, which shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among **24** the people. Yea and all the prophets from Samuel

after the flesh. It is sufficient, perhaps, to point out that the same expression 'thy brethren' is used frequently throughout the same book, Deuteronomy, and always in the sense 'thy brethren the Israelites'. See, e.g. Deut. iii. 18, 20; xv. 7; xxiv. 14. This fact alone ought to dispose of the contention that the word 'brother' refers to the line of Ishmael, and to convince every reasonable man that 'the prophet' in question was to be born of the house of Israel. In Deut. iii. 18, 'your brethren' are specifically defined to be 'the children of Israel'.

Like unto Me] See Heb. iii. 1-6, where the analogy is worked out to some extent, and where it is shewn that Christ vastly transcends Moses. We may, otherwise, point out that our Lord was 'like unto' Moses in that He is:—

- (a) The deliverer of His people from bondage.
- (b) The mediator of the covenant.
- (c) The revealer of God's will and word.
- (d) The worker of mighty miracles.
- (e) The appointed and faithful servant.

But while Moses was only a 'servant', Christ was the Son of God: while Moses gave the law, 'grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' (John i. 17); and, while Moses failed to lead the people into the promised land, through personal unworthiness, Christ leads His followers into perfect rest now (Heb. iv. 3) and glory hereafter (Heb. ii. 10).

23. Every soul which shall not hearken] The apostle presses home the quotation, so as to convince his hearers of the sin and danger of refusing obedience and allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Shall be utterly destroyed etc.] The original, in Deuteronomy, has 'I will require it of him'. St. Peter alters the phrase here, and adds instead one which frequently occurs, in substance, in the Pentateuch (see Gen. xvii. 14; Ex. xxxi. 14; Lev. vii. 20; Num. ix. 13). The phrase in the Greek is a strong and solemn one, and connotes complete destruction.

and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. Ye are the 25 sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God

24. Yea and all the prophets from] Samuel, following the period of the judges, ushered in the era of the prophets. Dark days had ensued after the decease of Moses and Joshua (1 Sam. iii. 1). But preaching and prophecy came to the front in Samuel's life-time. He was himself a 'prophet', declaring God's will and word to the people (1 Sam. iii. 20, 21; iv. 1; vii. 3-17) and uttering definite predictions (1 Sam. x. 2-16; xix. 18-24). He was, almost certainly, the founder of the 'schools of the prophets' (1 Sam. xix. 20) which we read of from his day forwards. He is styled in the Talmud 'the master of the prophets'. We find him coupled with Moses in Ps. xcix. 6; Jer. xv. 1.

Them that followed after] Perhaps this distinguishes the later prophets from those who more immediately succeeded Samuel.

They also told of these days] How constantly St. Peter reiterates the great fact which he, in common with the other disciples, had learned from his risen Lord (Luke xxiv. 27, 44-5). In his first Epistle he emphasizes and elucidates this statement (1 Pet. i. 10-12). Cf. John v. 39. How clearly those holy men of old, speaking things passing their own understanding, foretold the incarnation (Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6), the passion (Ps. xxii; Isa. liii), the resurrection (Ps. xvi; Hos. vi. 2), the ascension (Ps. lxxviii. 18) of our Lord, with the coming of the Holy Ghost (Joel ii. 28-32).

25. Ye] This is emphatic. 'Ye, of all men, with such inherited privileges and blessings, ought to give in your allegiance to Jesus Christ, the goal of all the prophecies'.

The sons of the prophets] Soions, that is, of the same race as they, and so heirs of all that they foretold of grace and glory. Cf. Rom. ix. 4-5; xv. 8.

And of the covenant] Heirs of all God's covenanted mercies (see Rom. ix. 4). God's covenant 'with the fathers', often

¹ made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And
 in thy seed shall all the families of the earth
 be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised
 26 ^{1 Gr. care.} ^{wanted.}

renewed, looked on clearly to the coming of the Christ (Ps. lxxxix. 19-37).

Saying unto Abraham] The words are quoted freely from the LXX version of Gen. xxii. 18. Cf. also Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18. St. Peter shews, by this quotation, that his Jewish hearers were heirs of the promised blessing. The same passage is referred to by St. Paul (Gal. iii. 16) to prove that the 'seed' of Abraham, in its Messianic aspect, denotes Jesus Christ.

26. Unto you first] The pronoun is emphatic again. See vv. 13, 14, 25. Cf. xiii. 46; xviii. 5, 6; Rom. i. 16.

God having raised up] The resurrection Gospel shines out brightly once again (i. 22; ii. 24, 32; iii. 15). But some interpret this verse, referring to v. 22, 'God having raised Him up (appointed Him) as Prophet and Saviour', considering that it does not relate to the resurrection.

His Servant] See v. 13, note.

Sent Him] He has 'sent Him', in grace, to bless men now. He will 'send' Him, in glory, to reign hereafter (v. 20).

To bless you] In accordance with the promise quoted in v. 25, 'shall be blessed'. The force of the Greek (present participle) is 'Sent Him as in the act of blessing you'. Blessing awaits even such rebels as they had shewn themselves to be, on condition of repentance.

In turning away every one of you] The blessing consists not merely in delivering men from punishment and danger but in turning them entirely from their sins.

The same verb occurs in Rom. xi. 26. There we read of *turning away sin from man*; here of *turning away man from sin*. 'Every one of you'. See ii. 38. Conversion is for the individual, just as we saw the pentecostal enduement to be (ii. 3). No matter how deeply some of those men may have been involved in active opposition to the Christ and in the sin of His

up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.

murder, this phrase 'every one of you' promises grace even unto them.

Iniquities] The word employed here savours of 'active wickednesses', the many forms in which a perverse delight in evil shews itself. It may be studied in Matt. xxii. 18; Mark vii. 22; Luke xi. 39; Rom. i. 29; 1 Cor. v. 8; Eph. vi. 12.

Thus the preacher here, as in chapter ii, leaves his audience face to face with the practical issue, that of turning from sin and accepting Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER III

1. *Principal divisions.* The following is a simple and easy division of the chapter for Bible study.

1. The lame man and his cure. vv. 1-11.
2. The name and its power. vv. 12-16.
3. The Christ and His claims. vv. 17-26.

2. *Prominent topics.*

(1) God's power to transform.

- (a) From complete lameness (v. 2) to perfect soundness (v. 16).
- (b) From being carried (v. 2) to walking and leaping (v. 8).
- (c) From begging (*αἰτεῖν*) to praising (vv. 8, 9, *αἰνεῖν*).
- (d) From lying at the gate (v. 2.) to leaping in the temple (v. 8).

We may regard the cripple as a type of an impotent Christian or of an unsanctified congregation.

(2) God's plan to bless.

- (a) Repentance and conversion. v. 19.
- (b) The blotting out of sins. v. 19.
- (c) Seasons of reviving. v. 19.
- (d) Christ's second advent. v. 20.
- (e) The restoration of all things. v. 21.

(3) A seasonable sermon (arising out of the immediate event).

- (a) It arraigns sin. vv. 13-16.
- (b) It exalts Christ. vv. 14-18.
- (c) It exhorts to repentance. vv. 19, 26.
- (d) It explains the way of salvation. vv. 19-22.

- 1 And as they spake unto the people, ¹ the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in
- 2 ¹ Some ancient authorities read the chief priests.

CHAPTER IV

1-22. PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

1. As they spake] 'While they were speaking'. Their discourse was interrupted by opposition. Wherever God's Spirit works, Satan tries to interfere. The cross always accompanies the Gospel. The opposition came from the official classes, whose authority and vested interests seemed to be affected by the new teaching. The hierarchical party thought that they had disposed effectually of Jesus of Nazareth, and were mortified to find His followers active, and that with a fresh spirit and power.

The priests] Some ancient authorities read 'chief priests', for which see v. 23, note. According to the reading of our text, it probably denotes those priests who happened to be then officiating in the temple services. As we know, there were twenty-four courses of priests, each of which courses performed temple duties for a week in turn (1 Chron. xxiv. 1-19; 2 Chron. xxiii. 8; Luke i. 5, 8, 9). No doubt they were mortified by the gathering of the people round the new teachers, and that in the temple precincts. f

The captain of the temple] Cf. Luke xxii. 4, 52; Acts v. 24-26. That is, 'the captain of the temple guard'. We read in Jer. xx. 1 of an official called the 'chief officer in the house of the Lord', who is clearly identical with 'the ruler of the house of God' (1 Chron. ix. 11; 2 Chron. xxxi. 13; Neh. xi. 11). He is probably the same official who is called in the Second Book of the Maccabees 'governor of the temple', and in Josephus 'captain'. He was at least a Levite, and most probably a priest, and was responsible for order in the temple, having under him a small body of Levite guards who acted as a sort of 'temple police'. The superintendence of the night

Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow :

watches appears to have been his special charge. As the officer responsible for temple order, he may have viewed with some amount of apprehension the enthusiastic crowd gathered in Solomon's porch.

The Sadducees] This important and influential sect comprised, largely, the 'priestly nobility' in the time of Christ and His apostles. Their name has been derived by many from the Hebrew word 'tsaddik' (righteous), on account of their close adherence to the written law and their strict severity as judges; but this derivation can hardly be supported. The origin of the name is rather to be sought in the fact that they were descendants of Zadok, the famous high priest of the days of David and Solomon (2 Sam. viii. 17; 1 Kings ii. 35), though some refer them to another and little known Zadok, a disciple of Antigonus of Socho. We know that the posterity of the great Zadok held the office of high priest down to the era of the Exile, as also that the main body of the post-exilic priests were sons of Zadok. Cf. also Ezek. xl. 46; xliii. 19; xlviii. 11. The chief priests down to the close of the Greek period are known to have been drawn from their ranks; and, under the Romans, the Sadducees both held the high-priesthood and had also a distinct preponderance in the Sanhedrin. Thus, though forming only a small minority of the Jews, they were a sort of priestly aristocracy, possessing great political influence. They were not nearly so popular as the Pharisees or strictly religious party. The Sadducees cared chiefly for the maintenance of the State, and were largely indifferent to religion except in so far as it was a matter of custom and expediency. They play a conspicuous part, as we shall see, in the history of the Acts, because the progress of the Gospel threatened their influence and interests.

As to doctrines, they held, in opposition to the Pharisees, (a) that only the written Law was binding, and not the oral traditions of the elders; (b) that there is no resurrection of the body, or system of future rewards and punishments;

4 for it was now eventide. But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

(c) that the existence of angels and spirits, i.e., of a supermundane world, is a myth; (d) that man is master of his own destiny, and that his own free will must guide him, without any supposed influence of divine predestination and grace.

Came upon them] With violence, to arrest them. Cf. vi. 12; xxiii. 27, where the same word occurs. †

2. Being sore troubled] A strong word, 'thoroughly pained.' It occurs again in the New Testament only in xvi. 18, of St. Paul's mental pain when he saw the woman at Philippi under the power of an evil spirit. The contrast between the two incidents is striking. *Here* it is the unconverted sore troubled by God's work. *There* it is the converted sore troubled by Satan's work. †

They taught the people] The priests and scribes regarded religious teaching as their own prerogative, and may have been doubly annoyed because these new teachers were unlettered men (v. 13). Mistakes and jealousies of a similar kind may easily creep into the Christian Church. We have no right to regard any teachers as 'unauthorized' who shew, by their conduct and successful labours, that they have been called and sent of God.

Proclaimed in Jesus] This means, most probably, that they 'published the truth of the resurrection as exemplified in the case of Jesus Christ'. His rising again was the pledge and first-fruits of all the rest (1 Cor. xv. 20-23).

The resurrection of the dead] The Sadducees (see v. 1) would, of course, sorely resent the promulgation of a doctrine which they emphatically denied, and all the more so that it was connected with the hated name of 'Jesus of Nazareth'. But, beyond that, all the hostile party recognized, by a true instinct, that this doctrine was the very key of the apostolic position (see i. 22).

3. In ward] Which means, of course, 'in prison' or 'safe keeping'. The word occurs again in ch. v. 18.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers 5
and elders and scribes were gathered together in
Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest *was there*, and 6

Unto the morrow] It was against Jewish law and custom to hold formal trials at night, i.e., after the twelfth hour (sun-set). Their rule was based, according to the Rabbis, on Jer. xxi. 12.

It was now eventide] Meaning 'the second evening' (Exod. xii. 6 margin) beginning with the twelfth hour. It was the 'ninth hour' when the two apostles went to the temple (iii. 1), and we can well believe that at least three hours must have elapsed since. The events of ch. iii. would require considerable time.

4. But many believed] Imprisoning the apostles did not nullify the effect of their preaching, or prevent the progress of the Gospel. The history of the Christian Church shews that seasons of special opposition and persecution have often proved epochs of wide progress and extension. 'The word of God is not bound' (2 Tim. ii. 9).

The number of the men] This excludes, apparently, women and children. Cf. Matt. xiv. 21.

Came to be about 5,000] The natural interpretation of this is that the three thousand of chapter ii. 41 increased now to five thousand (exclusive, it would seem, of women and children). The healing of the lame man, with the discourse which followed, undoubtedly accounted for new and large accessions, but the work had been steadily advancing all the time (ii. 47). This is the last time that the actual number of believers is mentioned. The Church soon grew beyond easy calculation.

5. Their rulers and elders and scribes] In the Gospels, the combination of names of Jewish authorities is usually 'chief priests, elders, and scribes' (see Mark xiv. 53; xv. 1; Luke ix. 22; xxii. 66). There is little doubt that, both there and here, the great Sanhedrin is intended, its constituent parts and groups being variously represented. The word 'Sanhedrin' means 'Council' and stands for the ruling Body and supreme authority among the Jews. We do not know when this Council

Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as 7 were of the kindred of the high priest. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power,

first came into existence, though the Jews themselves trace its origin back to the 'seventy elders' whom Moses appointed (Num. xi. 16-30). In allusion to that event, it consisted of seventy members, with a president, making seventy-one in all. It was in active existence in the Greek period, and, under the Romans, was still allowed to exercise authority, with certain important limitations. It was accustomed to assemble in the precincts of the temple, in a hall called 'the Hall of Hewn Stone', the members being seated in a semi-circle, with the president in the centre.)

Rulers] Cf. iii. 17; iv. 8, 26; xiii. 27; xxiii. 5. It is difficult to say precisely what the word represents here, but it most probably denotes the priestly party of the Sadducees, who were in the ascendancy in the Sanhedrin, the high priest and his relations only being differentiated in the following verse.

Elders] This word ordinarily denoted all the members of the Sanhedrin, which was often called also by the name 'Gerousia', or 'Council of elders'. We may understand, here, all the Sanhedrists not included under the terms rulers and scribes.

Scribes] These were the expounders and teachers of Jewish law and mostly belonged to the party of the Pharisees. They were, so to speak, the pandits or maulavis of Judaism, and supplied most of the Rabbis, or Jewish 'doctors of divinity'. They were thoroughly well versed in the letter of Holy Scripture and in all the minutiae of Jewish ritual and tradition..

6. Annas the high priest] Cf. Luke iii. 2; John xviii. 13, 24. He had been appointed high priest by the Roman legate Quirinus (Cyrenus) in A.D. 6 or 7, but was deposed by the procurator Valerius Gratus in A.D. 14-15, so that he was not actually high priest at this time. But, though he had lost his former office, he still retained great influence and power, as is shewn by the fact that our Lord was first taken to him for examination (John xviii. 13). We learn from Josephus that

or in what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the

he had five sons, all of whom attained to the high priestly office. Caiaphas, also, who was now high priest, was his own son-in-law. The old title still clung to Annas, and it may be that he was encouraged to ignore his deposition. Perhaps, too, he was Nāzi or president of the Sanhedrin, and some have advanced evidence tending to shew that there was a deputy-high-priest, who acted as locum-tenens for the high priest proper in case of need. But, apart from such conjectures, we have precedents in Josephus for employing the term 'high priest' of one who had formerly held that office. Annas belonged to the Sadducean party, and was virtually its chief, being very rich and influential. Precedence is given him in this verse, as he clearly overshadowed his son-in-law. Josephus calls him 'Ananus'. It must not be forgotten, also, that the word translated 'high priest' (*ἀρχιερεύς*) occurs frequently in the New Testament in the plural, being rendered 'chief priests' in our version (see v. 23, note). It is thus translated both 'high priest' and 'chief priest'. As head of the body of 'chief priests', Annas had, beyond all doubt, a unique position. Matt. xxvi. 3, 57; Luke iii. 2; John xi. 49; xviii. 13, 14, 24, 28.

Caiaphas] His full name was Joseph Caiaphas, and he was appointed high priest in A.D. 18 by Valerius Gratus who preceded Pontius Pilate as procurator of Judaea. His pontificate lasted till A.D. 37, when he was removed from office by Vitellius. He is notable both for his dictum that it was expedient that one man should die for the people and also for the fact that he was the high priest at whose tribunal our Lord was condemned. As mentioned above, he was son-in-law to Annas.

John and Alexander] We know nothing certainly of either of these men, though some have attempted to identify the former with Johanan ben Zacchai who became head of the Jewish synagogue at Jamnia after the destruction of Jerusalem. The context here merely shews that they belonged to the high priest's family. It has been conjectured, however, that

9 people, and elders, if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man,
 1 Or, in whom. 1 by what means this man is 2 made whole;
 2 Or, saved.

'Alexander' was a Greek representation of 'Eleazar', son of Annas; and the Bezan text reads, for 'John', 'Jonathan', who was one of Annas's sons.

The kindred of the high priest] The inference is that these were all members of the Sanhedrin. Otherwise, they, or some of them, may have attended on this occasion as assessors. Of course, they were all Sadducees.

7. Set them in the midst] As noted above (v. 5), the Sanhedrin sat in a semi-circle. The accused would stand in the centre of the circle, opposite to the president who was seated in the middle of the arc. These 'witnesses' of the Gospel, having preached in the temple, were now allowed, in God's providence, to carry their testimony into the Sanhedrin itself, a citadel inaccessible to them unless they had come there as prisoners. Thus Satan, in his opposition, overreached himself.

[Inquired] Imperfect tense, 'They kept inquiring'. The interrogation was repeated and prolonged.

By what power?] Literally 'By what kind of power?' The question would seem to be almost contemptuous, and suggests, perhaps, the use of magical power. Cf. Luke xi. 15. Magical exorcism was practised among the Jews of that period, a belief in magic having probably been imbibed during the Babylonian exile. Josephus gives instances which shew that even educated and cultured Jews placed credence in practices of magical exorcism. Cf. xix. 13-15, note.

In India, we are face to face with such beliefs in their crudest forms. The 'Mantra-râtis' and 'Mantra-sâstris' of Hinduism are notorious, being credited with the possession of power to work the most startling prodigies. It is more than probable that the Sanhedrin ascribed the healing of the lame man, in their own minds, to magic.

In what name?] Literally, 'In what kind of name?' This

be it known unto you all, and to all the people of 10 Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead,

was also probably spoken with a slight tinge of scorn. For 'name', see iii. 6, 16.

Ye] The 'ye' is emphatic by position, as though to say, 'Ye, unauthorized nobodies as ye are'.

8. Filled with the Holy Ghost] Cf. v. 31; xiii. 9. Peter was 'filled', that is, afresh at the time for the special work before him. Though the baptism of the Holy Ghost (ii. 4) is once for all, the 'filling' is repeated again and again. We have a literal fulfilment here of our Lord's promise in Matt. x. 18-20; Luke xxi. 12-15.

Ye rulers of the people] Cf. iii. 17. The title denotes, apparently, the priestly and more influential party in the Sanhedrin, consisting chiefly, if not entirely, of Sadducees (see v. 5). We mark the courtesy and deference of the apostle's mode of address; 'honour to whom honour is due' (Rom. xiii. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 13-17). The Christian should always be courteous, even under persecution.

And elders] The other members of the Sanhedrin (see v. 5, note).

9. We] Slightly emphatic, as though taking up the challenge of v. 7, (ye). Or perhaps it expresses deprecatory surprise (see iii. 12).

Are examined] This verb is often used technically of a legal examination by magistrates, and that sense is appropriate here. It is another of those words which are common and peculiar to St. Luke and St. Paul in the New Testament (Luke xxiii. 14; Acts xii. 19; xvii. 11; xxiv. 8; xxviii. 18; 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15; iv. 3, 4; ix. 3; x. 25-27; xiv. 24).

A good deed] Peter's words imply a mild rebuke to his judges. Men are usually examined judicially concerning evil deeds, not good ones. This noun means specially 'a beneficent act'. It occurs again only in 1 Tim. vi. 2, of the great 'benefit' of salvation, but we meet with the cognate verb in

even in ¹him doth this man stand here before you
 11 ¹Or. *this* whole. He is the stone which was set at
 name. nought of you the builders, which was made

Acts x. 38, and with another derivative in Luke xxii. 25 (benefactor). †

Impotent] that is, 'without strength', 'weak', 'infirm'. It occurs again in ch. v. 15, 16, where it is rendered 'sick'. It aptly describes the man's former condition (iii. 2).

By what means] The word 'means' has been inserted here, in English, to make the meaning clear. The Greek has only 'by (or in) what'; and, as shewn in the margin, may also be regarded as masculine 'in whom', as though alluding to the question of the rulers 'in what name?'

This man] He was standing by them as Peter spoke (vv. 10, 14), and had probably been incarcerated with the two apostles the previous night.

Is made whole] The force of the Greek tense (perfect) is 'has been made whole and still continues whole'. The verb was used by the Greeks primarily of keeping the body safe and sound, as also of healing in sickness. Then it passed on to denote the salvation of the soul, being the word ordinarily employed in the New Testament with that significance. In some passages it seems to imply both the healing of the body and the saving of the soul (e.g. Matt. ix. 22; Luke vii. 50; xvii. 19). Since the corresponding noun is used in v. 12 of 'salvation', we may reasonably suppose that Peter includes that, as well as bodily healing, in the phrase 'is made whole'.

10. Be it known] The apostle makes good use of the special opportunity. He sounds out, in the very citadel of the enemy, a clear proclamation of the power of the name of the living Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth] See iii. 6, where the same formula occurs. He would have the 'rulers' know that the despised 'Jesus of Nazareth' is the Christ of God (cf. ii. 22). And to their question 'in what name?' he replies boldly and explicitly, 'in the name of Jesus Christ'. *His* power and grace it was which wrought the deed of mercy.

the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

Whom ye crucified] There is slight emphasis on the personal pronoun, 'Ye, and not the Roman soldiers, were the real crucifiers'. We notice how constantly St. Peter insists on the guilt of his hearers in the crime of the death of Christ (ii. 23, 36; iii. 14, 15; v. 30). 'Crucified'. The same word as in ii. 36.

Whom God raised from the dead] He strikes yet once more the clear note of the resurrection (see i. 22; ii. 23-4, 32; iii. 15), and that knowing how unpalatable the truth was to his hearers (v. 2). On this point, the battle was to be fought and won.

Doth this man stand here] Here, before their very eyes, was a triumphant proof of the resurrection, an object lesson of the power of the living Christ. One who had been lame from birth was now 'standing' beside them. Let them account for the miracle, if they can, in any other way (see also v. 14). And not only was he standing by them, but he was 'whole', sound and strong and well in all respects.

11. **He]** Emphatic, 'He whom you crucified and did to the death'.

The stone which was set at nought] St. Peter characteristically supports his argument by Scripture. The quotation is taken from Ps. cxviii. 22, freely adapted from the LXX version. The apostle cites it again in 1 Pet. ii. 7. Some members of the Sanhedrin, at least, must have remembered how our Lord Jesus had quoted the same words only a few weeks before (Matt. xxi. 42-6), and had applied them so pointedly that 'the chief priests and Pharisees perceived that He spake of them' as the ungodly builders. It must have stung them to the quick now to have been plied again with the same words, confirmed by so palpable a proof of their truth.

'Set at nought'. A slight variation from the verb 'rejected' of the original Psalm. It means to regard and treat as of 'no

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled ; and they took knowledge

account'. It is peculiar in the New Testament to St. Paul and St. Luke. The latter uses it again in Luke xviii. 9 ; xxiii. 11.

The head of the corner] The corner stones of great buildings, such as palaces and temples, were often very large and ornate. Instances have been found of stones so shaped as to contain a right angle and so, by their projecting arms, to bind two walls together. But, in the case of the temple at Jerusalem, the stones consisted of long straight blocks running up to a corner, where they were met at the angle of the walls by similar stones, the ends of which came immediately above or below them. One such block has been found measuring over thirty-eight feet in length, and fifteen feet appears to have been a far from uncommon length.

The expression points, of course, to Christ's exaltation and to the fact that He is the strength and crown of the superstructure of the spiritual temple.

12. And in none other is salvation] Here St. Peter passes clearly from the thought of the healing of the body to that of the salvation of the soul (v. 9, note). And so far from acting merely on the defensive, he assumes the offensive. The exclusive claims of Christ as Saviour are here insisted on. He, and He only, has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and risen again from the dead to consummate the work of salvation. We are not dealing, therefore, with a great Guru or Prophet, the noblest of many human teachers, but with the Saviour of the world (1 John ii. 2). We need to bear this truth well in mind in India. It is not a question of whether or no there 'is good in other religions'; it is a question of the one divinely appointed way of salvation. Of none else than Jesus Christ can it be asserted that he is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world' (John i. 29). Men, therefore, reject this one way of salvation at their peril.

Neither is there any other name, etc.] His, and His only, are the merit and power which avail for man's salvation. The Church

of them, that they had been with Jesus. And seeing 14 the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had 15

of England has embodied the doctrine of this verse unhesitatingly in her eighteenth 'Article of Religion'. Salvation is only and entirely by faith in the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter was uncompromising on this point, and we must be uncompromising too.

13. Beheld] The verb has in it the idea of deliberate contemplation.

They watched the speakers carefully, and were struck by their courage in demeanour and speech.

Boldness] Meaning specially 'boldness of speech' (ii. 29, note). Peter, and apparently John also, spoke both freely and boldly. It was 'bold' indeed, on the part of Galilean fishermen, to proclaim Jesus of Nazareth as the one way of salvation in such an assembly of Jewish doctors and teachers.

Had perceived] Notice the change of tense. The 'beholding' was continuous (present participle); the 'perception' was immediate and complete (aorist participle), and probably formed while Peter was yet speaking. The idea of this verb is that of 'seizing a fact with the mind', so as to apprehend it.

Unlearned] Meaning specially 'unlearned in the Law and sacred writings', 'not versed in Jewish theology', 'ignorant of Rabbinic lore'. They had not received a scribe's education.

Ignorant] The Greek word means either 'one in a private position', and so 'a common man, a plebeian'; or 'one without professional knowledge of a subject', and so 'ignorant and ill-informed'. Thus it probably means here that, in the eyes of the Sanhedrin, they were alike common and ill-informed (cf. 1 Cor. i. 26-9). They were neither nobles nor scholars; rulers nor Rabbis. The word occurs again in 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 23-4 (unlearned); 2 Cor. xi. 6 (rude).

Marvelled] Imperfect tense, 'they kept marvelling'.

They took knowledge of them] Imperfect tense again, 'they

commanded them to go aside out of the council, 16 they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable

began to recognize them', or 'they kept (one by one) recognizing them' (see iii. 10, where the same word occurs). It may mean not only that many of the Sanhedrists recognized them as men they had previously seen in company with Jesus, but also that they now recognized in them a power and boldness which spoke of their connexion and communion with Him.

14. The man which was healed standing] See v. 10, note, His presence there, healed and standing upright, was the loudest of all testimonies.

Could say nothing against it] So was fulfilled the promise of Luke xxi. 15, the only other passage in which the same verb occurs, 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or gainsay.' There is no argument against the evidence of a transformed life.

15. Conferred] Another verb peculiar to St. Luke in the New Testament, and used by him with divers meanings (Luke ii. 19; xiv. 31; Acts xyii. 18; xviii. 27; xx. 14). It is in the imperfect tense, 'they went on conferring', shewing that their consultation lasted for some time.

16. Notable] Literally 'known', i.e., 'well known', 'manifest to all'.

Miracle] As the margin shews, the word is 'sign' (ii. 22 note). We may claim, therefore, that the healing of the lame man was a **sign** of spiritual things. Are there not lame Christians who need spiritual healing, that they may walk in the way of God's commandments and become object-lessons to the world of the power of Christ?

We cannot deny it] They would, clearly, have denied it if they could (cf. Matt. xxviii. 11-15), but it was too notorious. Moreover it was impossible either to pronounce it an imposture or to attribute it to magic, for the evidence was unassailable. It is a sad fact that men can come face to face with the supernatural, and yet not feel its power in their own souls.

1 miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in

17

1 Gr. *sign.*

17. That it spread no further] That is, 'that the fame of the miracle and, through it, the new teaching, spread no further'.

Let us threaten them] The verb only occurs again in 1 Pet. ii. 23, where one of the very apostles thus threatened recalls the patience of his Lord. The cognate noun is found in v. 29; ix. 1; Eph. vi. 9. Mocking (ii. 13) is here succeeded by threatening.

Speak] The word, though quite general, is often used in the New Testament of public speaking and preaching (e.g., ii. 4, 6, 7, 11; iv. 29, 31).

In this name] Literally, 'On this name', i.e., making Christ's name the basis and subject of their teaching.

18. Charged them] The decisions and orders of the Sanhedrin were legally binding, under certain limitations (v. 5, note). It was therefore perilous to disobey such an official injunction. But a higher 'charge' was upon the apostles (x. 42, same verb). See also i. 4, note.

Not to speak at all nor teach] The first of these verbs is rare in the New Testament, being found again only in 2 Pet. ii. 16, 18. It was used by the Greeks of 'uttering a voice or sound', but especially of 'speaking loud and clear'. The same word, strengthened by a prefix, has already occurred in ii. 4 (which see). It is probable, therefore, that public utterance was intended, though many think it refers to private conversation too.

In the name of Jesus] Literally, 'On the name of Jesus' (see preceding verse). The Sanhedrin, of course, suppress the name Christ which Peter had added (v. 10).

19 the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: 20 for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and 21 heard. And they, when they had further threatened

19. Whether it be right, etc.] The principle of Matt. xxii. 21 applies here, and the apostles lay it on their judges to face the question. Their constitutional rulers commanded silence as to the Gospel. Their heavenly Master, on the other hand, had emphatically commanded them to preach (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Acts i 8; x. 42). The higher authority must be obeyed. It was not a question of personal opinion, or even of private judgement, but of obedience to a plain divine command. Does not the same principle hold as regards the duty of publicly confessing Christ in baptism, though non-Christian parents and husbands and relatives may forbid?

20. We] Emphatic, 'As for us, our duty is plain'.

Cannot but speak] A moral necessity was laid upon them. They must obey their 'marching orders'. See 1 Cor. ix. 16.

The things which we saw and heard] As though to say 'when we were with Jesus Christ both in His earthly ministry and after His resurrection'. A true witness is one who tells what he has seen and known. Cf. 1 John i. 1, 2; Acts xxvi. 16.

21. Further threatened] A compound verb, formed by adding a prefix to the simple verb of v. 17. 'They added further threats'.

Finding nothing how they might punish them] No pretext for punishment presented itself to them, much as they wished to find one. Even the scribes could produce no law or legal fiction under which they could be found guilty before the people.

Because of the people] These words are to be connected directly with 'finding nothing'. The people's knowledge of the facts of the case stood in the way of a fraudulent conviction, and their attitude deterred the Sanhedrin from proceeding to extremities (cf. Mark xi. 32; xiv. 1, 2).

them, let them go finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people ; for all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was 22 more than forty years old, on whom this
 1 miracle of healing was wrought. 1 Gr. sign.

And being let go, they came to their own company, 23

All men glorified God] Imperfect tense, 'Continued glorifying God'. Thus Peter's main object had been accomplished (iii. 12, 13). What great results followed on the healing of one lame man.

22. More than forty years old] This is added as one of the causes why men continued to glorify God, as well as to shew how strong the evidence was which prevented the Sanhedrin from punishing the apostles. St. Luke, as a physician, takes special note of a fact which rendered the cure the more remarkable. Shrunken, withered, and atrophied limbs had yielded to the power of Christ.

Miracle] 'Sign'. See v. 16. /

23-31. THE PRAYER MEETING AND ITS RESULTS

23. To their own company] Some interpret this as meaning only their fellow-apostles ; but there is nothing in the context to confine the word to them. Understand, therefore, the sense to be 'their fellow-believers'. It would appear that they had a centre for meeting somewhere, perhaps still the 'upper chamber' (cf. i. 13). After being in the hostile Sanhedrin, it must have been pleasant to find themselves once more with their own friends.

Chief priests] We constantly read in the New Testament of the 'chief priests' (the same word as for high priest, ἀρχιερεύς, but in the plural) as a class by themselves. (Matt. ii. 4 ; xvi. 21 ; xx. 18 ; Mark xiv. 10, 43, 53 ; Luke xxii. 52 ; John xii. 10). We have the word so used again in the Acts in v. 24 ; ix. 14, 21 ; xxii. 30 ; xxiii. 14 ; xxv. 15 ; xxvi. 10, 12. This usage of the word is also confirmed by passages in Josephus. We know

and reported all that the chief priests and the elders
24 had said unto them. And they, when they heard it,
lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said,

that Herod and the Romans set up and deposed high priests at will, insomuch that there were no less than twenty-eight of them from the time of Herod the Great to the capture of Jerusalem by Titus. From such deposed and non-officiating high priests probably arose the group called in our version 'chief priests'. The title may have included, also, the heads of the twenty-four priestly courses. They thus constituted the leaders of the hierarchy, and were probably synonymous with the 'rulers' (cf. v. 5).

Elders] See v. 5, note.

24. Lifted up their voice] Cf. ii. 14; xiv. 11; xxii. 22. It is clear that the prayer which follows was offered in a loud voice. They cried aloud on God.

With one accord] The same word as in i. 14, which see. It expresses perfect accord of heart and desire, and shews that the prayer was united as well as loud prayer. It is usual to represent the prayer as led by Peter, the rest following it, perhaps clause by clause; but there is nothing whatever in the context about Peter taking the lead in it, and perhaps the 'they', which is the subject of the sentence, would rather point to others of the company than to Peter. All we know certainly is that they all prayed together, the mode in which the prayer was offered not being specified.

O Lord] The word means 'sovereign Master.' Cf. its use in Luke ii. 29; 2 Pet. ii. 1; Jude 4; Rev. vi. 10. In their hour of special need, the disciples rested their souls on the thought of God's governance and power.

Thou that didst make the heaven, etc.] A phrase agreeing almost verbatim with Ps. cxlvi. 6 (LXX). Cf. also Exod. xx. 11. God's creative power is a firm rock for weary feet to stand on. The God of nature is also the God of grace. Cf. 1 Pet. iv. 19. There is no support in the Bible for the erroneous assumption

O ¹ Lord, ² thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: ³ who by the Holy Ghost, *by* the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say,

Why did the Gentiles rage,
And the peoples ⁴ imagine vain things ?

¹ Or, *Master.*

² Or, *thou art he that did make.*

³ The Greek text in this clause is somewhat uncertain.

25

⁴ Or, *meditate.*

that matter is essentially evil. Neither does it agree with the doctrine which underlies certain systems of Hindu philosophy, viz., that the world or its constituent matter has been eternally in existence.

25. By the Holy Ghost] See i. 16; and compare iii. 18. To the apostles, the Scriptures were the inspired message of the divine Spirit.

David Thy servant] See ii. 25, 34. The word 'servant' is the same as was applied to Christ in iii. 13, 26. It is used of David again in Luke i. 69.

Didst say] The quotation is from Ps. ii. 1, 2, word for word from the Septuagint version. We notice that the prayers of these early disciples, like their sermons, were saturated with Holy Scripture.

The Gentiles rage] Referring, in this application of the words, to the part which the Romans took in the opposition to, and persecution of, the Christ. See v. 27. The word 'rage' primarily denotes the fierce neighing, etc. of untamed horses, and then comes to denote the haughty and unruly conduct of men.

The peoples] That is, probably, the tribes of Israel, the Jews and their party (v. 27). Others, however, understand it in its usual sense of Gentile nations.

Imagine vain things] The word 'imagine' properly means 'to give anxious thought and care to anything'. It occurs again in Mark xiii. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 15.

'Vain things', for it were verily 'vain' to endeavour to destroy the Christ and His Church.

- 26 The kings of the earth set themselves in array,
 And the rulers were gathered together,
 Against the Lord, and against his ¹ Anointed:
- 27 ¹ Gr. *Christ*. for of a truth in this city against thy
 holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both
 Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the

26. The kings of the earth] Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate are here in view (v. 27).

The rulers] Denoting, most probably, the leaders of the Sanhedrin (see v. 5) as it is the same word as we have repeatedly met with in that connexion (iii. 17; iv. 5, 8). Some, however, understand it of Pontius Pilate, confining the application of 'kings' to Herod.

Were gathered together] The very verb used of the assembling of the Sanhedrin in v. 5. It is repeated in v. 27.

His Anointed] Meaning, of course, in the ultimate application of the Psalm, the Messiah, the Christ (see margin). We notice how literally the predictions of this Psalm were fulfilled, and how real, therefore, the inspiration of Holy Scripture must be.

27. Thy holy Servant Jesus] Cf. iii. 13, 26. The phrase here is parallel with 'His anointed' in v. 26. The adjective 'holy' is different from the one so translated in ii. 27, being the usual one employed to denote holiness in the New Testament. Its root idea is that of 'separation' or 'consecration', and it is peculiarly suitable in this verse as indicating One who had been anointed and set apart for His special work.

In connexion with the special holiness of the Lord Jesus, it is a remarkable fact that He is the only prophet who, on a careful study of Muhammadan authorities, can honestly be pronounced sinless. 'With the exception of Jesus Christ, the prophets are spoken of (in the books of Islám) as doing what every one but an orthodox Muslim would call 'sin' (Sell).

peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do what-²⁸
soever thy hand and thy counsel fore-ordained to come
to pass. And now, Lord, look upon their
threatenings: and grant unto thy ^{1 Gr. bond-}servants ²⁹

28. Thy hand and Thy counsel] Cf. iii. 18. The 'hand' speaks of God's disposing power; the 'counsel' of His pre-determining wisdom. We have already met the latter word in ii. 23, which see.

Fore-ordained] The death of Christ for man's salvation was pre-ordained before the foundation of the world (ii. 23). The verb here used, save for this one passage, is peculiar to St. Paul. If we collate the texts in which it occurs, we find that,

- (a) Christ's death and passion were fore-ordained (Acts iv. 28).
- (b) The believer's likeness to his Saviour was fore-ordained (Rom. viii. 29, 30).
- (c) The hidden wisdom of the Gospel was fore-ordained (1 Cor. ii. 7).
- (d) The Christian's adoption and privileges were fore-ordained (Eph. i. 5, 11).

29. Look upon their threatenings] The verb 'look upon' is peculiar to St. Luke, being only found again in Luke i. 25. *There* He looks upon His servants, to confer favour; *here* He looks upon His enemies, to avert their malice. The word is often used in the Greek classics of the oversight and notice of the pagan gods. It is employed in the Septuagint to express God's providential care. For 'threatenings' see vv. 17, 21. The best thing for the Christian to do with the 'threatenings' and opposition which he encounters for the Gospel's sake is to take them to God and let Him 'look upon' them and deal with them. He is the true 'court of appeal'. He can scatter all evil with His eyes (Prov. xx. 8).

Unto Thy servants] They do not apply to themselves here the more special word which they had used of Christ (v. 27), but a different one meaning 'bondservants'. It is a favourite one

30 to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant

with the apostles, when speaking of themselves (Rom. i. 1; Jas. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1; Jude 1), and denotes that they belonged entirely to their heavenly Master, His serfs and vassals. It is peculiarly appropriate here, since they were addressing God as their 'absolute Master' (v. 24). As His bond slaves, they desired, above all things, that His will should be accomplished.

To speak Thy word] In spite of the prohibition of the Sanhedrin (v. 17). As Bengel points out, they did not ask, as they might naturally have done, to be allowed to be silent, in face of gathering opposition; nor did they pray that others might be sent to preach instead of them. No! they asked for grace to enable them to do the difficult thing; for, as 'bondslaves', it was theirs to carry out their Master's orders.

With all boldness] See v. 13. They realized that more boldness in speech and testimony would be required than ever, in view of coming opposition, and so they asked for 'all boldness'. Their special petition corresponded with their special need.

30. While Thou stretchest forth Thy hand to heal] God's hand confirms, by mighty works, the true testimony of His servants (cf. John xiv. 10-12). One of the great objects of miracles was to convey God's attestation to the truth of the Gospel message.

Signs and wonders] See ii. 22. We notice that 'signs' stand first here, as though to emphasize the ethical and spiritual bearing of miracles (vv. 16, 22, notes).

The name] Notice the constant recurrence of the word 'name' all through this chapter (vv. 7, 10, 12, 17, 18), and see note on iii. 6.

Thy holy Servant Jesus] See v. 27. They wanted their Saviour to be glorified, and all the more because the powers of earth were now arrayed against Him.

Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was 31 shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

And the multitude of them that believed were of one 32

31. The place was shaken] They had appealed to the almighty ruler of the world of nature (v. 24), and He answered them by a token of His power in the physical domain, as well as by a new bestowal of spiritual energy. This 'shaking' was, of course, miraculous, and Bengel sees in it a token that God was going to 'shake' the world by the Gospel. The same word is used in xvi. 26 of the shaking of the prison at Philippi by the earthquake, also an instance of a miraculous interposition by God on behalf of his people.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost] Just as on the day of Pentecost (ii. 4). Cf. v. 8. A new 'filling' was needed for the new crisis. Thus God met the fresh need of His people by a fresh bestowal of His Spirit.

They spake the word of God] Satan had attempted to prevent their 'speaking' (cf. v. 17, where the same word occurs.) God empowers them to 'speak' with even greater boldness and power. The tense is imperfect, 'they continued to speak'.

With boldness] Thus they received exactly what they had asked for (v. 29), 'boldness in testimony'. True prayer is definite and specific, and God grants what is asked for, when it is in accordance with His will. /

32-37. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP. BARNABAS

32. The multitude] The word tells of continued progress. The hundred and twenty of i. 15 had now become a large community.

Of them that belleted] A common name for Christians at that early period (ii. 44; v. 14). The force of the phrase is 'Of them that had become believers'. Faith in Christ was their bond of unity.

- heart and soul: and not one of *them* said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus¹; and great grace was upon them all. For
- 33
- 1 Some ancient authorities add *Christ*.
- 34

Of one heart and soul] Literally, 'the heart and soul of those who had become believers was one'. The 'heart' speaks, perhaps, more especially of the intellectual side of their nature (thought and will); and the 'soul' of the more emotional side (affections, impulses). The phrase connotes complete concord. The Bezan text adds 'and there was no distinction among them'.

The things which he possessed] This shews that the sharing of their goods with others was of a purely voluntary character. There was no pressure or compulsion used. Cf. ii. 45. This unity in the Church served to further the progress of the Gospel; as the next verse clearly shews.

33. With great power] The same noun as was used in i. 8, the promise of which verse thus received a special fulfilment.

Gave the apostles their witness] The tense of the verb is imperfect, 'They continued giving their witness', and the verb in question is expressive of their obligation so to do, as it often means 'to discharge a debt' (Matt. v. 26; xviii. 25; Rom. xiii. 7). Cf. Rom. i. 14, 15; 1 Cor. ix. 16. True Christians owe it both to their Lord and to their fellowmen to bear witness, both by lip and life, to the Gospel of salvation.

Of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus] This, as we have seen again and again, was the foundation of apostolic teaching (i. 22; ii. 24, 31; iii. 15, 26; iv. 2, 10). They neither suppressed nor modified the doctrine because it gave offence (v. 2). We must humbly but faithfully proclaim the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel in India, without either compromise or accommodation. There must be no 'toning down' of the great truths of the Trinity in Unity, the Divinity of Christ, the vicarious sacrifice of Calvary, the Personality of the Holy Ghost, under an amiable, but

neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution **35** was made unto each, according as any one had need.

mistaken, idea of meeting the prejudices of Hindus or Muham-madans. The trumpet must give no uncertain sound. It is positive truth which really lays hold of men.

Great grace] This is sometimes explained, with a reference to ii. 47; Luke ii. 52, as meaning that they found much favour in the eyes of the people. But it seems better to understand it of God's special grace resting on the Christian Church. 'Great power' in speaking and 'great grace' in living were the outcome of that prayer meeting and of the new energizing by the Holy Ghost.

Upon them all] And not on the apostles only.

34. For neither was among them any that lacked] The 'for' shews that the 'great grace' was evidenced by their brotherly love and philanthropic actions. No one was allowed to be in real need. (Cf. Jas. ii. 15-17.) One of the forms in which 'grace' manifests itself is charity to others (2 Cor. viii. 1-4, 7).

Sold them] See ii. 45, note.

Brought the price] Both this verb and the one which follows are in the imperfect tense. They 'continued bringing' and 'continued laying' the proceeds at the apostles' feet (from time to time).

35. At the apostles' feet] See v. 37 also. The apostles are here regarded as seated in the place and position of teachers (see Luke x. 39; Acts xxii. 3). According to eastern custom, the gifts and offerings were placed not in the hands but at the feet. We are familiar with the custom in India.

According as any one had need] This phrase is repeated from ii. 45.

36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of ¹exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus

1 Or, consolation.

36. Joseph who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas] He is more commonly known by the name which was given him by the apostles, Barnabas, which represents the Hebrew 'Bar-Nabuyah, 'Son of prophetic exhortation'. The Greek equivalent, added by St. Luke for his Gentile readers, may be translated either 'Son of exhortation' or 'Son of consolation'. The new name was probably given him either now or at some later period because of something special in his teaching (see xi. 22-3; xiii. 1). We know from the context that he was a Levite by birth, and that he was a native of Cyprus. We find him here selling his possessions and handing over the proceeds to the apostles. Later, it was he who took Saul of Tarsus by the hand after his conversion and vouched for his sincerity (ix. 27). He, again, was the one chosen by the apostles to go and inspect the new departure in the work at Antioch of Syria (xi. 22-4). After fetching Paul thither (xi. 25-30), he continued to teach at Antioch till he accompanied his friend to Jerusalem, to carry alms to the poor Christians there (xi. 30). Returning to Antioch with Paul (xii. 25) and his cousin Mark (whose mother Mary lived in Jerusalem), he was chosen by the Holy Spirit as Paul's fellow-labourer, and accompanied him in the first great missionary journey to Cyprus, Antioch (of Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Chs. xiii., xiv.) After returning to Antioch in Syria, Paul and he attended the Council at Jerusalem convened to consider the question of circumcising Gentile converts (ch. xv.; Gal. ii. 1-10). After the favourable decision of that Council, they returned to Antioch, and it was apparently at this juncture that Barnabas was influenced unfortunately by Peter's inconsistent conduct (Gal. ii. 11-13). He then separated from Paul over the question of taking John Mark as their fellow-labourer, and went off with Mark to Cyprus (xv. 37-39). We thereupon lose sight of him. The title of 'apostle' is given to him in Acts xiv. 14.

Cyprus] An island in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea between the convergent coasts of Cilicia and Syria. Its

by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money, **37** and laid it at the apostles' feet.

greatest breadth is sixty miles, and its extreme length one hundred and forty-five. It was called 'Chittim' in Old Testament times. In early days it was famous for its timber and copper, as also for pottery, etc. After being subject in turn to the Egyptians, Persians, and Greeks, it passed into the possession of the Romans in 58 B.C. It was attached by them at first to the province of Cilicia, but was made a separate province about 90 B.C. For some time it remained an 'imperial' province, but afterwards became a 'senatorial' one, and was such when St. Paul visited it (see xiii. 7, note). The seat of government was at Paphos, but Salamis was the largest and most important town in the island.

Jews settled there in the time of Ptolemy (about 295 B.C.). And a considerable colony of them lived there thenceforward. The dispersion after the death of Stephen carried Christians to Cyprus (xi. 19), and Cypriots were among those who preached at Antioch (xi. 20). We find Paul and Barnabas preaching there in their first missionary journey (xiii. 4-12), and also Barnabas proceeding thither again, in company with Mark, after his separation from Paul (xv. 39, 40). Cyprus is mentioned again in xxi. 3, 16; xxvii. 4.

37. Having a field] Originally, the Levites had no property (Deut. x. 8, 9); but, later, we find instances of their holding it (Jer. xxxiii. 7-12). Barnabas' field was evidently in Palestine, and we find his relative Mary also possessing a house in Jerusalem (xii. 12). He was glad afterwards to work, like Paul, with his own hands (1 Cor. ix. 6) for the Gospel's sake.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER IV

1. *Principal divisions.* We may profitably consider, in connexion with these witnesses of Christ:
 - (1) Their conflict. vv. 1-7.
 - (2) Their confession. vv. 8-12.
 - (3) Their courage. vv. 13-22.
 - (4) Their communion. vv. 23-31.
 - (5) Their concord. vv. 32-7.

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira
2 his wife, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the
price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a
certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) A pattern apology. These apologists
- (a) Were filled with the Holy Spirit. v. 8.
 - (b) Witnessed to the power of Jesus Christ. vv. 9, 10.
 - (c) Pointed to the evidence of transformed lives. v. 10.
 - (d) Proclaimed clearly the one way of salvation. vv. 11, 12.
 - (e) Reflected the grace and glory of their Master. v. 13.
 - (f) Refused to compromise their commission. vv. 19, 20.
- (2) A pattern prayer meeting.
- (a) They prayed with one accord. v. 24.
 - (b) They appealed to the God of power. v. 24.
 - (c) They relied on the truth of Scripture. vv. 25-8.
 - (d) They asked for definite things. vv. 29, 30.
 - (e) They sought only their Saviour's glory. v. 30.
 - (f) They received the Spirit's power. v. 31.
 - (g) They used their new endowment in fresh service. vv. 31-5.

CHAPTER V

1-11. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

1. **But a certain man]** He stands in striking contrast with Barnabas. The true is followed by the counterfeit. The two men are examples of real and unreal consecration. The narrative which follows is a sure proof of the integrity of the writer, who might easily, had he wished, have suppressed circumstances so unflattering to the Christian community.

Ananias] The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew 'Hananiah' (The Lord is gracious). See Neh. vii. 2; Jer. xxviii. 1. We find the same name borne by a disciple in Damascus (ix. 10, 11, 12, 13, 17; xxii. 12) and by the high priest before whom Paul was arraigned (xxiii. 2; xxiv. 1). It was a common name among the Jews.

Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart 3
to ¹lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep
back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles ¹Or, *deceive*.
it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it ⁴

Sapphira] A name probably derived from the Greek for 'sapphire', one of the precious gems, just as the English name 'Margaret' comes from the Greek word (*margarites*) meaning 'pearl'. Some, however, derive it from a Hebrew word signifying 'beautiful'. Husband and wife were together in the deceit. As Bengel says, their names were 'gracious and beautiful', but their morals were bad.

Sold] See ii. 45; iv. 34-7.

A possession] See ii. 45, note, where the same word occurs.

2. Kept back] This verb means 'to put aside for oneself' and so 'to purloin'. Cf. Titus ii. 10, the only other passage in which it is found in the New Testament. It is thus Paulo-Lukan in usage. It carries with it the root idea of doing an action 'stealthily and clandestinely'. It is used in the Septuagint of the stealthy act of Achan (Joshua vii. 1). Ananias' sin consisted in the fraudulent withholding of part of the price while he professed to deliver up the whole. He sought reputation, and practised gross deceit in the seeking.

Being privy to it] That is 'having a knowledge of it'. She shared both his knowledge and his deceit.

Laid it at the apostles' feet] The very phrase used of Barnabas in iv. 37. The outward action of the two men was, to human eyes, exactly the same; but their inward motives and real acts were radically different. It is the inward disposition, not the outward form, which marks true piety (John iv. 23-4). Ananias posed as devout, but he was really a liar and a cheat. We must beware of vainglory and hypocrisy.

3. Why?] 'On what account?' This suggests that Ananias might have successfully have resisted the temptation, had he so desired.

was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and

Satan] The Hebrew word so represented properly signifies 'adversary', but it is frequently rendered by a Greek word meaning 'accuser' or 'calumniator'. It indicates the great arch-enemy of God and man. The word Satan only occurs in the Acts again in xxvi. 18, though it is frequently found in other passages of the New Testament (see especially Rev. xii. 9). Just as the Holy Spirit, a real Person, has come to sanctify God's people and to give success to their labours, so Satan, also a real person, is busily engaged in the attempt to lead them maliciously astray and to thwart their efforts for the progress of the Gospel.

Filled thy heart] Cf. John xiii. 27; Luke xxii. 3. The idea is that of complete occupation and possession. The heart which might have been filled with the Holy Ghost is seen, in sad contrast, to be filled with Satan.

To lie to the Holy Ghost] The construction in the Greek gives the verb a transitive force, 'to deceive (by lies) the Holy Ghost'. See margin. It was really the Holy Spirit, and not the apostles, with whom Ananias had to do, and his deception was practised not against men but against God (Ps. li. 4). Of course, the Holy Ghost, being omniscient, could not be 'deceived', as this narrative clearly shews.

4. Whiles it remained, etc.] The meaning is 'While the land remained unsold, did it not remain thine own?' This shews that it was not compulsory among the Christians to sell their possessions, but that the matter was entirely voluntary.

After it was sold, etc.] That is, 'And even after the sale was effected, were not the proceeds of it still in thine own power?' This shews, further, that the sin of Ananias really consisted not in keeping to himself the sale price, in whole or in part, but in surreptitiously retaining part of it while he pretended to be surrendering the whole. He was guilty not only of deceit and untruth but also of sacrilege in that he withheld what he

great fear came upon all that heard it. And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

1 Gr. young.

had, professedly, dedicated to God. We learn plainly, from this incident, that every kind of lying, prevarication, hypocrisy, and false profession is abominable in the sight of God. Under no circumstances are they excusable, least of all in religious things.

How is it that thou hast conceived, etc.] More literally, 'How is it that thou hast laid this thing (as a plan) in thy heart?' We see from this that the plan was not due to a sudden impulse, but that it had been carefully premeditated and was thoroughly deliberate.

Thou hast not lied unto men] A slightly different expression to that in v. 3, and without any transitive force. The lie was, really and ultimately, one against God, though, of course, His people also were sinned against.

But unto God] A comparison of this expression with v. 3 provides us with an incidental, but strong, argument both for the personality and also for the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Inasmuch as we can only lie against a person, His personality is clearly assumed. Moreover, since Ananias is stated in v. 3 to have lied 'to the Holy Ghost', while here he is said to have lied 'unto God', we see that the Holy Paraclete is verily and truly God.

To the apostles, the personal presence of the Holy Spirit was a conscious and an abiding reality. He it was who guided and controlled them, and presided over the councils and actions of His Church (cf. xv. 28).

5. Ananias hearing these words] The verb is a present participle, and implies that the punishment overtook him suddenly while he was yet listening. Judgment was immediate and unmistakable. We are not to think of the apostle's words as conveying in themselves either a curse or a sentence (see iii. 12, note). He merely declared God's message. We have here, so to speak, a sudden and abnormal flashing forth of God's righteous judgment upon sin. Punishment does not, usually, follow so quickly upon sin. But due retribution will overtake

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And 8 Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much.

every sin, sooner or later, unless immunity be sought and found in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eccles. viii. 11; Gal. vi. 7, 8; 1 Tim. v. 24; Rev. xx. 11-15).

Gave up the ghost] One word in the Greek, 'expired'. It is not a classical one, but is found in the Septuagint and in later usage. As it appears to be confined, outside the LXX. to medical literature, it suggests the writer's technical knowledge as a physician. In the New Testament, we meet it again in v. 10 and in chapter xii. 23. It is thus used only of three sudden, terrible, and judicial deaths, viz., those of Ananias, Sapphira, and Herod Agrippa I. We mark the contrast with the quiet 'falling asleep' of Stephen (vii. 60). Thus God taught the early Church, by a signal judgment, the peril of hypocrisy and presumption in spiritual things. Cf. Lev. x. 1-2.

Great fear] See ii. 43; v. 11; xix. 17. Such fear was wholesome, and must have proved a deterrent to the insincere and worldly-minded.

6. The young men] Literally 'the younger men' (margin). Cf. v. 10, where, however, a different word is used in the original. Some have seen in these 'younger men' a class of servants or officials, in contrast with the 'elders' of the Church (cf. Luke xxii. 26); but it is improbable that organization had already advanced to such an extent in the nascent community. It seems better, therefore, to understand the phrase as denoting those who, by reason of the vigour of youth, were physically strong, and so best fitted to perform the last offices to the dead. Cf. Exod. xxiv. 5.

Wrapped him round] That is, most probably, they wound him up in the garment which he happened to have been wearing at the time. It is a word frequently used in medical phraseology of bandaging limbs, etc., and suggests that the young men bound up the dead body carefully.

But Peter *said* unto her, How is it that ye have agreed 9 together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. And she fell down 10

Carried him out] They carried him, i.e., 'outside the city'. Among the Jews graves were often prepared beforehand. In the East, we are accustomed to such immediate burial after death. It is sad to think that the first burial in the Christian community was that of a hypocrite.

7. About the space of three hours after] Apparently, Ananias had carried the offering alone to the apostles (v. 2), and his wife followed later. The 'three hours' may possibly suggest that she came at the next ensuing 'hour of prayer'. She had this little further space allowed her for repentance, but repented not.

8. Answered] See iii. 12, note. Very likely her look of surprise at not finding her husband there and her astonishment at seeing the awe-struck faces of those present were tantamount to an unuttered question.

For so much] Peter may either have pointed to the money still lying before him, or may actually have named the amount. Sapphira now added to her former deceit a deliberate falsehood.

9. Have agreed] The same verb as we find in Matt. xviii. 19. *There* we have saints 'agreeing', in perfect accord, to pray. *Here* we have sinners 'agreeing' to cheat and deceive.

To tempt the Spirit of the Lord] That is 'to put him to the test', to make trial whether He would discern their hypocrisy or not. Here again we have an incidental proof both of His personality and divinity (v. 4).

The expression 'the Spirit of the Lord' is rare in the New Testament (Luke iv. 18; Acts viii. 39; 2 Cor. iii. 17), and probably corresponds with the phrase 'the Spirit of Jehovah' which is common in the Old Testament.

The feet of them, etc.] It would seem that the footsteps of the 'young men' returning from Ananias's burial were heard,

immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

just at that juncture, outside the door. We may well suppose that the burial, etc., would have occupied fully three hours (v. 7).

Shall carry thee out] That is, to burial. The fact that her fate was thus definitely predicted would render the miraculous judgment which followed the more solemn, and serve to convince men of a definite divine interposition.

10. Immediately] See iii. 7, note.

At his feet] Just where the spurious offering had been laid (v. 2). Possibly it was lying there still.

Gave up the ghost] See v. 5.

Buried her by her husband] The Jews usually interred their dead in rock-hewn caves. It was probably in such a tomb that Sapphira was laid beside her husband.

11. Great fear] See v. 5. In v. 13 we have the fear vividly represented.

The whole church] This is the first occurrence of the word 'church' in the Acts of the Apostles (*ἐκκλησία*). We shall meet the word again with this meaning in vii. 38; viii. 1, 9; ix. 31; xi. 22, 26; xii. 1, 5; xiii. 1; xiv. 23, 27; xv. 3, 4, 22, 41; xvi. 5; xviii. 22; xx. 17, 28. In xix. 32, 39, 41, it is used in its original classical sense of an 'assembly'. On examining these passages, we find that the term usually indicates the 'church' or 'congregation' of Christians in a particular town or district; while in vii. 38 it is employed to denote the entire 'congregation' of Israelites in the wilderness. As time passed on, it came to indicate also the whole body of Christians throughout the world, considered as one vast congregation (see e.g., Eph. i. 22-3; v. 23-7; Phil. iii. 6; Col. i. 18;

And by the hands of the apostles were many signs **12** and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. But of the **13** rest durst no man join himself to them; howbeit the

1. Tim. iii. 15). The term speaks of Christians as 'called out' from the world, to form a corporate body of believing and consecrated people.

And upon all that heard] Those, that is, who were outside the Christian body, but who heard the fame of these events (see v. 13).

12—16. PROGRESS OF THE WORK

We see, in these verses, that the effect of the defeat of Satan's stratagems was immediate and great. We have;

(a) Great fear, v. 11; as against hypocrisy.

(b) Great power, v. 12; manifested through the apostles.

(c) Great progress, v. 14; in numbers and growth.

(d) Great attraction, vv. 14, 15; outsiders being drawn in.

So God overrules the devices of the evil one.

12. Many signs and wonders] See ii. 22, 43, notes; and observe that, as in iv. 30, the word 'signs' takes precedence here also.

Were wrought] Literally 'continued taking place', the tense of the verb being imperfect.

All] That is 'all the believers'. The startling events which were happening drew them closer to God and to one another. The whole body of believers were undisturbed in their public gatherings.

With one accord] See 1, 14, note.

In Solomon's porch] See iii. 11. Possibly, the apostles gathered their followers there for public worship and instruction, when they went to the temple at the stated 'hours of prayer'.

13. But of the rest] Those, that is, who had not yet embraced the faith of Christ; or, possibly, those who were not

- 14 people magnified them; ¹ and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women; insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came
- 15 ^{1 Or, and there were the more added to them, believing on the Lord.}

prepared to become sincere believers. The fear of God was upon them, and they dreaded the consequences of presumption or insincerity.

Join himself] A verb employed chiefly by St. Luke in the New Testament (Luke x. 11; xv. 15; Acts viii. 29; ix. 26; x. 28; xvii. 34; Rom. xii. 9; 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17). The phrase may mean that outsiders feared to intrude into these Church assemblies; or it may imply even closer association. /

To them] That is, to the Christians (cf. ii. 47).

14. **Believers were the more added, etc.]** While the insincere and half-hearted were alarmed and deterred, the true and sincere were attracted. This verse shews that those denoted by the phrase 'the rest' in v. 13 were neither actually nor potentially 'believers'.

The Greek original allows also the sense of the margin, 'believers in the Lord were the more added to them'.

Multitudes] The only instance in the New Testament of the word 'multitude' occurring in the plural. It implies very large accessions.

Both of men and women] Contrast iv. 4, where only 'men' are mentioned. Possibly 'women' are specially referred to here in view of the notice of widows to follow in chapter vi. 1; for women were numerous in the Church already, though not particularly mentioned save in individual cases (i. 14; v. 1). It is characteristic of St. Luke to draw special attention to them (see i. 14, note).

15. **They even carried out the sick]** The verb is the same as in vv. 6, 9; but how great the difference between that 'carrying out' and this. The connecting particle 'insomuch' would seem to imply that it was the new converts referred

by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. And there also came together the multi-¹⁶tude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

to in v. 14 who thus carried out their sick. Their faith thus brought blessing to others (cf. Mark ii. 3-5).

Beds and couches] The former word denotes 'a small bed', and is peculiar to this one verse. The latter word occurs frequently in the Gospels, and is found again in Acts ix. 33. It is said to be of Macedonian origin, and describes more especially the bed of the poor, 'a pallet', thus indicating a meaner couch than the former word connotes. See also note on ix. 33.

As Peter came by] He was the most prominent of the apostles, and had specially dealt with Ananias and Sapphira, so that the people naturally held him in high regard in connexion with recent events.

His shadow might over-shadow some one of them] Cf. xix. 11, 12. We are not definitely told that miracles of healing actually resulted from his shadow falling on them, though the inference would seem to be that such was the case, and the Bezan text seems definitely to affirm it. In any case, there was no virtue in Peter's shadow. It was God's power alone, appropriated by sincere faith, which brought healing to the sick. Peter would have been the very first to repudiate the idea of any power attaching to himself (iii. 12, 16). The verb 'overshadow' is found elsewhere only in Matt. xvii. 5; Mark ix. 7; Luke i. 35; ix. 34; always of a supernatural phenomenon.

16. Came together] Literally 'kept coming together', denoting a continual coming.

The cities round about] This is the first notice of the extension of the work beyond Jerusalem. The light of the Gospel must needs spread far and wide.

- 17 But the high priest rose up, and all they that were
with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and
18 they were filled with jealousy, and laid hands on the

Them that were vexed with unclean spirits] Cf. Luke vi. 18, where the same verb occurs, only strengthened by a prefix. We find it nowhere else in the New Testament. It was in use among medical writers. Notice that the 'sick' are differentiated from those 'vexed with unclean spirits'. The belief prevalent among certain classes in India that all sickness is due to demon-possession is entirely without foundation in fact.

They were healed every one] Here again continuous action is denoted by the verb. There is no doubt about the healing in this case, whatever we may think of the circumstances of v. 15. All who were thus brought to the apostles were healed by the power of God operating through His servants. /

17-26. THE APOSTLES IN PRISON. MIRACULOUS RELEASE

17. The high priest rose up] That is, either Annas or Caiaphas (iv. 6, note). In vigorous opposition (cf. vi. 9). The common people were attracted, but the authorities were annoyed and alarmed.

All that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees) See iv. 1, 6, notes. We notice that, whereas in the Gospels the hostility to Christ and His cause came chiefly from the Pharisees, the opposition throughout the Acts proceeds mainly from the Sadducees. The change is due to the fact of the resurrection which had occurred in the interim. It is a strong argument for the truth of the history that this striking change occurs quite naturally, the writer calling no special attention to it. It is one of these 'undesigned coincidences' which bespeak so forcibly the literary truthfulness of the narrative.

Sect] This word is found again in the Acts in xv. 5; xxiv. 5, 14; xxvi. 5, as denoting 'a religious party.'

They were filled with jealousy] The noun connotes both 'envy' and 'zeal'. They were envious of the popularity of the

apostles, and put them in public ward. But an angel 19 of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, Go ye, and stand and 20 speak in the temple to the people all the words of

apostles and of the progress of the Gospel; and they were zealous for their own prestige and authority.

18. Laid hands on] See xii. 1; xxi. 27.

The apostles] All the apostles this time (v. 29), and not, as before, Peter and John only. The battle waxes hotter as the work progresses.

In public ward] Cf. iv. 3, where the same word 'ward' occurs. The addition of 'public' or 'common' may point to confinement of a more ignominious character than before. We see from v. 19, that, as on the former occasion, the arrest took place after sunset.

19. An angel of the Lord] While the Sadducees, who denied the existence of angels (xxiii. 8), were plotting against the apostles one of those celestial creatures, whose very being they repudiated, came and miraculously set Christ's servants free from prison. Cf. xii. 7; and see note on i. 10. We find angels, in the Acts of the Apostles, as God's messengers and instruments:

- (a) Delivering God's people from trouble (v. 19; xii 7-10).
- (b) Directing God's people in service (viii. 26).
- (c) Guiding God's people in perplexity (x. 3, 7, 22; xi. 13).
- (d) Encouraging God's people in danger (xxvii. 23).
- (e) Punishing the wicked (xii. 23).

Opened the prison doors] Contrast the miracle in xii. 10, where the door opened of its own accord. God works in many ways. We are told that the doors were found shut the next morning (v. 23), and so the angel must have closed them again. We see, thus, that God's works are not left imperfect or incomplete. He is a God of order and harmony.

20. Go ye and stand and speak in the temple] The deliverance was in order to new service. While the Sadducees would fain

21 this Life. And when they heard *this*, they entered into the temple about daybreak, 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-house to

close the lips of these preachers, God bids them speak in public with fresh courage and power.

The force of the Greek is 'take your stand and speak'.

All the words of this Life] A beautiful description of the Gospel message. They were to keep nothing back, but boldly to proclaim 'all' the words of God's evangel, including the doctrine of the resurrection with its assurance of everlasting life.

The 'Life' here intended is, of course, eternal life, that life which is the life indeed (1 Tim. vi. 19), and which is found and realized in union with our Lord Jesus Christ (John xvii. 3; Col. iii. 4; 1 John i. 2; v. 11, 12). The expression of the text will mean, therefore, 'all those things which have to do with eternal life, as realized in union and communion with Him who is Himself the resurrection and the life' (John xi. 25).

21. About daybreak] Meaning 'soon after daybreak'. Cf. Luke xxiv. 1, 22; John viii. 2. We know, from Jewish literature, that the temple was open for worship at the first streaks of day. The apostles shewed the utmost alacrity in obeying the command they had received, and lost no time in setting to work.

Taught] The tense is imperfect, 'were (or, continued) teaching'.

The high priest, etc.] See v. 17, note.

Came] into the hall, that is, where the Sanhedrin were wont to assemble.

The council and all the senate] The word here translated 'council' is 'Sanhedrin'. It occurs in the Acts again in iv. 15; v. 27, 34, 41; vi. 12, 15; xxii. 30; xxiii. 1, 6, 15, 20, 29; xxiv. 20. For a description of it, see iv. 5, note. The word

have them brought. But the officers that came found 22 them not in the prison; and they returned, and told, saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, 23 and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now when the 24

rendered 'senate' is 'Gerousia', which was often used technically of the Sanhedrin considered as a 'council of elders' (iv. 5, note). Here, however, it appears to be employed with a wider significance as denoting a body of old and experienced men other than, and additional to, the Sanhedrin, called in as assessors in this important matter. Some, however, consider that the word 'senate' is used here in apposition to 'Sanhedrin', the two being identical. If so, the sense is 'the council, even all the senate'.

Prison-house] A different word to the one in v. 18, though denoting the same place. It is used again in Matt. xi. 2; Acts v. 23; xvi. 26; and is thus employed of the prisons in which John the Baptist, the twelve apostles, and Paul and Silas were confined.

22. The officers] A word often rendered 'ministers' (i.e., attendants). See, e.g., xiii. 5; xxvi. 16; though it was also employed by the Greeks of military officers in immediate attendance on their general. Here, it denotes the members of the temple guard (see v. 26; iv. 1, note).

Prison] This word, again, is different from the 'ward' of v. 18 and from the 'prison-house' of v. 21, though referring to the same place of 'guard'. /

23. Shut in all safety, etc.] We see, from this, how miraculous the deliverance of the apostles had been. The angel had performed his commission so perfectly that no sign of confusion or hasty departure was visible. He had closed the prison doors again and brought his charge safely past the warders without their knowledge. The order and quiet of it all are very striking. Only the empty prison-house told the tale of a supernatural interposition.

captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them
25 whereunto this would grow. And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the
26 people. Then went the captain with the officers, and

24. The captain of the temple] See iv. 1, note.

The chief priests] See iv. 23, note.

Were much perplexed] 'They were at their wit's end'. See ii. 12, where the same verb occurs.

Whereunto this would grow] More literally, 'what this might become (or, lead to)'. One mysterious event upon another was happening, and they were at a loss to know what it would all result in.

25. There came one] We have reason to suppose that, at this period, the Sanhedrin no longer met in the 'Hall of Hewn Stones' in the temple (iv. 5, note), but in a chamber attached to those shops or booths on the Temple Mount which belonged to the high priestly family and where a profitable trade in sacrificial animals was driven (Edersheim). The messenger in question doubtless came from the temple to this place of gathering a little distance off.

26. The captain] That is, 'the captain of the temple guard' (v. 24; iv. 1).

The officers] See v. 22.

Without violence] They had forcibly laid hands on them before (v. 18), but the miraculous deliverance had doubtless enhanced the fame of the apostles, and added fuel to the flame of the people's zeal on their behalf.

Feared the people] Cf. Matt. xxi. 46; Mark xii. 12; Luke xx. 19; xxii. 2.

Lest they should be stoned] They had felt the pulse of popular feeling, and feared the consequences of exciting it further. Though they feared being stoned themselves, they did not mind stoning others (John x. 31-3; Acts vii. 58).

brought them, *but* without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when 27 they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, 28 We straitly charged you not to teach in this name:

27-42. THE APOSTLES BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN.

PETER'S SPEECH. GAMALIEL

27. **The council]** That is 'the Sanhedrin', as in v. 21.

28. **We straitly charged]** Literally 'with a charge we charged you', a Hebraism expressing intensity, with the meaning shewn in the text. Cf. Luke xxii. 15; Acts xxiii. 14. The reference is, of course, to iv. 18, where the same verb occurs. Contrast their Master's 'charge' (i. 4, note).

In this name] Literally, 'on this name' (iv. 17, 18). The high priest purposely avoids mentioning what 'name' he refers to. Peter, on the other hand, glories in publishing it (vv. 30, 31). In accordance with his unwillingness to name the Lord Jesus Christ, the high priest proceeds to speak of 'this man', probably with something of contempt in his tone.

Ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching] The force of the Greek verb is 'ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and it continues full of it'. Here is strong testimony, from hostile lips, both to the faithfulness of the teachers and to the success of their teaching.

Intend] The verb expresses *will* as well as *purpose*. The corresponding noun has already occurred in ii. 23; iv. 28, and follows again in the context in v. 38 (counsel).

To bring upon] This verb is found again only in 2 Pet. ii. 1, 5, and there also it is used of retributive judgment.

This man's blood] These judges have to take the place, so to speak, of culprits, and defend themselves against a charge of murder, brought against them by the prisoners arraigned before them. They refer doubtless to Peter's words in ii. 23,

and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.
 29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We
 30 must obey God rather than men. The God of our

36; iii. 15, and especially those in iv. 10-12. We must remember, in this connexion, that they and their followers had accepted all responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ before Pilate (Matt. xxvii. 25). We notice how carefully they avoided all reference to the miraculous deliverance of their prisoners from the prison-house.

29. We must obey, etc.] Cf. iv. 19, 20. Moreover, God's command had been repeated and renewed by the angel since they last stood before the Sanhedrin (v. 20).

The verb here translated 'obey' is unusual in the New Testament, and is Paulo-Lukan, occurring again only in v. 32; xxvii. 21; Tit. iii. 1, and means specially 'to obey one in authority,' 'to be obedient to a ruling power' (cf. Tit. iii. 1). God is the supreme ruler, and His commandments claim full and implicit obedience.

30. The God of our fathers] See iii. 13. Peter shews these Jewish rulers that the true Jew ought to accept and follow Jesus, the Messiah.

Raised up] Once more the fact of the resurrection is pressed home upon them (i. 22; ii. 24, 32; iii. 15, 26; iv. 10). The Sadducee section of the Sanhedrin could not silence these witnesses to a risen Christ.

Jesus] Here we have the name which the high priest so studiously refrained from uttering. St. Peter omits 'of Nazareth' this time (ii. 22; iv. 10).

Ye slew] An unusual verb, peculiar to the Acts, and occurring again only in xxvi. 21. It means 'to murder with one's own hands'. This significant word appears to have been purposely chosen to emphasize the guilt of the Jewish authorities in the crucifixion of Christ, and both renews and enforces the charge of which they confess themselves accused (v. 28). It is as

fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt ¹ with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, ^{1 Or, *ut.*} 31 for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.

though the apostle said 'Yes, indeed, we do hold you guilty of the Saviour's holy blood, for it was your hands, and none other, which murdered Him'.

Hanging Him on a tree] A distinct reference to Deut. xxi. 22-3, from which the phrase is cited nearly verbatim. Cf. Gal. iii. 13. Not only had they slain the Christ with their own hands, but they had also subjected Him to that special mode of ignominious death which, in Jewish eyes, was associated with curse and shame. We meet with allusions to this again in x. 39; xiii. 29. /

31. Him] This is emphatic. 'The same Jesus whom you murdered is now exalted to supreme honour and glory'.

Did God exalt] See ii. 33 where the same verb occurs. Once more, their dishonouring of the Christ is placed in striking contrast with God the Father's treatment of Him.

With His right hand] See ii. 33, note. As there, so here also we may read 'to His right hand' (see margin).

Prince] See iii. 15, where the same word is used. Here, the idea of *ruling* seems the more prominent one. At the same time, that of *originating* (repentance and remission of sins) is also included.

Saviour] The word is found also in xiii. 23. It only occurs three times in the Gospels (Luke i. 47; ii. 11; John iv. 42), but we meet with it frequently in the later books of the New Testament. St. Peter emphasizes by means of it the truth which he had proclaimed on his previous trial before the Sanhedrin (iv. 12). Christ is enthroned in heaven both to rule and to save. Salvation means complete deliverance alike from the guilt (2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Eph. i. 7) and from the power of sin (Matt. i. 21; Luke i. 74, 75; Rom. vi. 14) in this present life. It thus differs entirely from the Hindu idea of 'emancipation',

- 32 ¹ Some ancient authorities add in him.
² Gr. sayings.
³ Some ancient authorities read and God hath given the Holy Ghost to them that obey him.
- 33 And we are witnesses ¹ of these ² things; ³ and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.
- 34 But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them.
- 34 But there stood up one in the council, a

or freedom from misery, consequent on escape from embodiment or re-incarnation.

Repentance] See ii. 38; iii. 19, notes.

To Israel] The Jews have a special interest in, and claim upon, the Messiah (iii. 25-6, notes).

Remission of sins] See note on ii. 38. The word 'remission' means primarily 'a letting go', 'a discharge' from an obligation or bond. It implies, in its Christian usage, the releasing of the sinner from the guilt and consequences of his sin, for the merit's sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. It occurs again in the Acts in x. 43; xiii. 38; xxvi. 18.

This great truth differentiates Christianity widely from the Hindu doctrine of Karma, according to which every act works out its own consequence inexorably, leaving no room for remission of any kind. While we Christians believe that 'whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap', we yet rejoice to know that there is a divinely ordained way by which a penitent believer may obtain release from the dread penalties and eternal consequences of sin.

32. Witnesses] See i. 8, note. If we adopt the marginal reading 'in Him', it will mean 'in union and communion with Him'. It is well for all Christian workers to remember that there is no true or effectual 'witness' to the Gospel, save in vital fellowship with Christ (John xv. 5).

Of these things] The Greek word (see margin) really means 'these sayings', i.e., the facts which had just been proclaimed, namely, our Lord's crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation. The whole of chapter one bears out the truth of the apostle's statement

Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honour of all the people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while. And he said unto them, Ye 35 men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching

So is also the Holy Ghost] Cf. John xv. 26-7; Heb. ii. 3-4.

The Holy Ghost witnesses to the truth of the Gospel alike by external signs and miracles (ii. 16-21) and by His work of conviction and grace in the hearts of those who hear it (ii. 37). He was outpoured on the day of Pentecost in order (amongst other reasons) to apply and make effectual the message of salvation (John xvi. 8-11).

Hath given] Aorist tense 'gave', at some definite time. In the case of the apostles and their companions, the fulness of this gift was received at Pentecost. Normally, it follows on full obedience to the claims of Christ (ii. 38-9).

To them that obey Him] The verb 'obey' is the same as in v. 29, and so implies 'submissive obedience to an appointed authority'. It is in the present tense here, 'to those who are (continually) obeying Him'. If we would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we must assume, and constantly maintain, the attitude of entire obedience to our heavenly Master. }

33. Were cut to the heart] Literally 'were sawn through'. The verb is only found again in vii. 54. It speaks of violent, mental anguish and indignation. The convicting words of the apostle cut them like a saw, and, as the Greek word shews, the process was a protracted one.

Were minded] The same verb as in v. 28 (intend). Being in the imperfect tense, it shews that their intention and consultation were continuous, and not the impulse of a moment. They had repudiated the charge of being murderers of Christ (v. 28), and yet were willing and wishful to shed the blood of His apostles too. }

34. A Pharisee] As such, he would not fully share the Sadducean antipathy to resurrection teaching (see iv. 1, note; also xxiii. 6-10). Possibly Gamaliel's advice to the council was influenced partly by his theological proclivities.

36 these men, what ye are about to do. For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as

Gamalle] The word means 'the reward of God'. We may safely regard him as identical with the famous Rabbi Gamaliel, grandson of that Hillel who founded the more liberal of the two schools into which the Pharisees were divided. He was a man of great learning and noble character, the first of those seven eminent Jewish doctors of divinity who alone were styled Rabban (Master). He had studied Greek literature, and was in advance of most of the Rabbis in culture and liberality. He was held in the highest possible repute by the Jews, and was honourably named 'the beauty of the Law'. He is said to have died eighteen years before the destruction of the temple. As we know, Saul of Tarsus was one of his pupils (xxii. 3).

A doctor of the law] A Paulo-Lukan word found again only in Luke v. 17; 1 Tim. i. 7. It denotes one skilled in the law as a teacher, a canonist, so to speak. Gamaliel's fame and learning carried great weight in the Sanhedrin, as well as among the people generally.

To put the men forth] That is, to remove them from the council chamber, till a decision should be arrived at. †

35. Ye men of Israel] A honourable mode of address (ii. 22; iii. 12).

Take heed to yourselves] As though to say 'beware of making mistakes. Act cautiously and wisely'.

36. Theudas] Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 5. 1) gives an account of an impostor called Theudas who, in the days of the procurator Fadus (A.D. 45 or 46), persuaded a multitude of people to follow him across the Jordan, pretending that he could divide its waters by his power as a prophet. He was attacked suddenly by Fadus and slain, his followers being dispersed. Many critics, assuming this impostor to be identical with the Theudas of whom Gamaliel speaks, claim that

obeyed him, were dispersed, and came to nought. After 37 this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment, and drew away *some of the* people after him: he also perished; and all, as many as obeyed

St. Luke has been guilty of a blundering anachronism in ascribing this event, which had not yet happened, to a much earlier period. A careful perusal of the passage in Josephus, however, shews serious discrepancies between his narrative and the events described by Gamaliel, so that it were premature, to say the least, to insist on the identity of the two rebellions. In particular, the small band of four hundred men mentioned in our text differs very widely from Josephus' expression 'a great part of the people'. Moreover, it is hardly consonant with St. Luke's proved accuracy as a historian that he should be guilty of so flagrant a mistake, quite apart from questions of inspiration. The time alluded to by Gamaliel is prior to 'the enrolment' (v. 37), that is a period near the birth of our Lord. Now Josephus himself says (*Antiq.* xvii. 10. 4), speaking of that very period, 'At this time there were ten thousand other disorders in Judaea, which were like tumults, because a great number put themselves into a warlike posture'. He only describes a few of these disorders, and leaves most of them unrecorded. When we remember that Theudas—which may either be a variant of the Aramaic Thaddaeus (Judas), or an abbreviated form of the Greek Theodoros and so may represent various Hebrew names having the same meaning (Matthias, Mattithias, Mattaniah),—was a natural name, and probably a fairly common one, it were surely presumptuous to state that, in a time of such numerous revolts, the events alluded to by Gamaliel did not actually take place at the period in question. We may fairly claim, therefore, that the revolt referred to here is not identical with that which was to follow later in the time of the procurator Fadus, but that it relates to a disturbance which occurred before the days of 'the enrolment', though Josephus has given us no detailed account of it.

37. **Judas of Galilee]** We have a definite account of this man and his insurrection in Josephus (*Antiq.* xviii. 1. 1; xx. 5. 2). The

- 38 him, were scattered abroad. 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 be overthrown ;
- 39 but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them ; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against

'enrolment' referred to is the one conducted by Quirinus (Cyrenius) during his second period of office as governor of Syria in A.D. 6-7 (cf. Luke ii. 2). It was intended by the Romans to make this enrolment a basis of taxation, and, on this account, the Jews became greatly excited. It was then that Judas, with a Pharisee named Sadduc, led them in revolt, exhorting them strenuously to assert their political liberty. Josephus calls this leader both Galilaean and Gaulonite (from Gamala, east of Galilee); and he also tells us that the sect of the Zealots took their rise from this movement. Gamaliel's statement about the death of Judas supplements Josephus's account, but is doubtless correct.

38. Let them alone] This was advice directly opposed to the original intention of the Sanhedrin (v. 33). It shews the influence which one wise man can exert even over angry and excited minds. The principle which Gamaliel here enunciates will often, though by no means always, be found a good and useful one.

Counsel] See ii. 23, note. It would seem to denote, here, the declared *determination* and *design* of the apostles to preach the Gospel.

Work] The 'work', i.e., of witnessing (v. 32),—their 'design' taking tangible shape in action.

Of men] That is, 'of human origin', like the revolts of Theudas and Judas.

It will be overthrown] As though to say, 'It will come to nought, inevitably, without your interference, as being opposed to God's will and purposes'.

39. To overthrow them] That is 'the apostles and their company'. We should naturally have expected Gamaliel to say 'ye will not be able to overthrow *it*'. These preachers were

God. And to him they agreed: and when they had 40 called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. They therefore departed from the pre-41 sence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted

thoroughly identified with their cause. They were ready to stand or fall with it.

To be fighting against God] Literally, 'to be fighters against God'. The word is peculiar to this verse. It is a solemn fact that those who wilfully resist the Gospel of Christ are really fighters against God (cf. ix. 4; Matt. xii. 30). We cannot be neutral in this holy war.

40. To him they agreed] They were persuaded by his arguments to desist from killing the apostles.

When they had called the apostles] They summoned them back to the council chamber from the place to which they had been temporarily remanded (v. 34).

They beat them] The verb occurs again in the Acts in xvi. 37; xxii. 19. The Sadducean party were loth to let them off unpunished, and possibly a compromise was thus arrived at between them and the Gamaliel section of the Sanhedrin. The apostles probably received the 'forty stripes save one' spoken of in the Law of Moses (Deut. xxv. 1-3), and the word used suggests a severe cudgelling or flogging. These were the first stripes, so far as we know, received by Christ's followers on His behalf.

Charged them] See iv. 18, notes.

41. Rejoicing] Cf. xvi. 25; Matt. v. 10-12. Blows and stripes only served to send them on their way rejoicing. This is the true spirit of Christian fortitude. They felt honoured in being allowed to suffer dishonour for such a Master. In the Acts of the Apostles, we have

(a) Christ's witnesses rejoicing in persecution (here).

(b) A new convert rejoicing in salvation (viii. 39).

(c) Gentile hearers rejoicing in the Gospel (xiii. 48).

42 worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ.

They were counted worthy] A Paulo-Lukan verb found again only in Luke xx. 35 ; 2. Thess. i. 5. Thus it is used of being counted worthy of *suffering now* and of *glory hereafter*. Cf. Gal. vi. 14.

To suffer dishonour] Cf. Luke xx. 11 ; John viii. 49, where the same verb is used. The verse involves almost a paradox, 'counted worthy to be dishonoured'. These soldiers of Christ rejoiced in their honourable wounds.

For the Name] See v. 28 ; iv. 12. It means here practically, 'for Jesus Christ'.

42. Every day] See ii. 46. In public and private they continued their evangelistic labours daily.

They ceased not to teach and to preach] The tense of the Greek verb suggests a steady continuance in their work of witnessing. The word rendered 'preach' means 'to declare as good tidings'. It occurs fifteen times in the Acts (viii. 4, 12, 25, 35, 40 ; x. 36 ; xi. 20 ; xiii. 32 ; xiv. 7, 15, 21 ; xv. 35 ; xvi. 10 ; xvii. 18). We see that their joy in persecution stimulated them to active and vigorous labours. While 'teaching' may denote the regular instruction of converts and inquirers, 'preaching' has reference rather to evangelistic labours.

It is interesting to notice that, whereas the chapter began with a foe in the camp (Ananias), it ends with a friend (Gamaliel) in the camp of the enemy.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER V

1. *Principal divisions.* We may study the chapter under the following heads ;

- (1) *The witnesses attested.* vv. 1-16.
 - (a) Satan's wiles. vv. 1-10.
 - (b) God's witness. vv. 11-16.
- (2) *The witnesses arrested.* vv. 17-26.
 - (a) Man's opposition. vv. 17-18.
 - (b) God's interposition. vv. 19-26.

Now in these days, when the number of the disciples 1 was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the ¹ Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, ¹ Gr. *Hellenista*.

(3) *The witnesses arraigned.* vv. 27-42.

(a) Witnessing. vv. 27-32.

(b) Suffering. vv. 33-40.

(c) Rejoicing. vv. 41-2.

2. *Prominent topics.*

(1) *The enemy's wiles.* vv. 1-16 (cf. 2 Cor. ii. 11).

(a) The specious temptation. v. 2 (to false profession).

(b) The spurious offering. vv. 2-3. (contrast Barnabas's genuine offering).

(c) The speedy detection. vv. 3, 4.

(d) The signal punishment. vv. 5-11.

(e) The salutary effect. vv. 11-13.

(f) The striking miracles. vv. 12, 14-16.

(2) *The enemy's wrath.* vv. 17-42 (failing in one method, he tries another).

(i) *Satanic wrath.*

(a) The witnesses angrily attacked. vv. 17-18.

(b) The witnesses bitterly reproached. v. 28.

(c) The witnesses dangerously threatened. v. 33.

(d) The witnesses severely beaten. v. 40.

(ii) *Divine succour.*

(a) The witnesses freed from prison. v. 19 (by an angel).

(b) The witnesses defended in the council. vv. 34-9 (by Gamaliel).

(c) The witnesses stimulated for joyful service. vv. 41-42 (by the Spirit).

CHAPTER VI

1-7. THE SEVEN DEACONS

The history has now arrived at a new and important crisis, and St. Luke, with a true instinct, recognizes the fact and describes the events in considerable detail. The appointment of the deacons is the first step in Church organization, and the work

because their widows were neglected in the daily minis-
 2 ^{1 Gr. pleas.} tration. And the twelve called the multitude of
^{ing.} the disciples unto them, and said, It is not ¹ fit

of Stephen leads on to that of St. Paul and to the evangelization of the Gentiles. The Christian community is saved from the danger of becoming a Jewish synagogue, and develops into a missionary and universal Church.

1. Was multiplying] The increase in the number of believers brought its own special difficulties, and necessitated care and organization in order to the promotion of unity and efficiency. A large accession of converts in any mission field invariably gives rise to fresh problems.

A murmuring] The same noun occurs again in John vii. 12; Phil. ii. 14; 1 Pet. iv. 9. Probably there was real cause for this discontent; and it was symptomatic of the party spirit and jealousy which had long existed between the Aramaic and Hellenistic sections of the Jewish people. It now threatened to invade the Christian Church and to destroy the unity which prevailed among its members. Satan, having failed to arrest the work of the Gospel by external attacks, now sought to injure it by internal divisions. He still pursues the same tactics in India.

The Grecian Jews] Margin, 'Hellenists'. This word is found again in ix. 29, and in many manuscripts in xi. 20. It should be distinguished from the similar word 'Greeks' ('Hellenes'), for which see notes on xi. 20; xiv. 1. It denotes the Hellenistic Jews,—the Jews, that is, who had come under the influence of Greek civilization and spoke Greek as their vernacular. They owed their existence as a body to the dispersion of large numbers of Jews in Gentile lands as colonists and traders. They used as their Bible, the Septuagint, or Greek, translation of the Old Testament Scriptures. Many of them had now become Christians and carried their special characteristics with them into the new community.

The Hebrews] Jews, that is born and bred in the Holy Land, who spoke Aramaic as their vernacular (i. 13, note), and who used the Hebrew Bible in the original, with the help of Targums or

that we should forsake the word of God, and ¹serve tables. ²Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

1 Or, minister to tables.

2 Some ancient authorities read But, brethren, look ye out from among you.

paraphrases. As a body, they looked askance on Gentile civilization and clung tenaciously to the customs and traditions of their fatherland. They were wont to say 'Cursed be he who teacheth his son the learning of the Greeks'. Converts from this conservative section of the Jews carried many of their predilections with them into the Christian Church. In particular they would be in danger of shewing favouritism to those of their own persuasion and of despising and neglecting their Greek-speaking brethren. In order to realize the difficulty which arose, we must imagine two considerable bodies of converts suddenly brought together into one and the same religious community, the one consisting of English-speaking Indians with western education and ideals, the other comprising Indians with conservative ideas of nationality and caste, despising all things foreign and using only their vernacular tongue. The spirit of racial and caste distinctions is fatal to the welfare of God's work, and is to be wisely and persistently resisted. It is the glory of the Gospel that it is capable of welding together elements which are naturally heterogeneous and opposed. See *Introd. v. 3.*

Their widows were neglected] It was easy to overlook them, as Bengel points out, even in a holy society such as the primitive Church. It is possible that even the apostles had allowed themselves to be influenced, however unconsciously, by class prejudice; or the very multiplicity of their duties may be accountable for the seeming neglect. But the cause of discontent had only to be stated to find a prompt remedy. The imperfect tense of the verb suggests that the neglect had been going on for some time. It is of the very essence of Christianity to care for the poor and needy and distressed, and to be philanthropic in all respects. From the first, widows in real need have been specially cared for by the Church of Christ (1 Tim.

4 But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in
5 the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased

v. 3-16; Jas. i. 27). We contrast, with sorrow, the condition of widows in non-Christian India, especially among high-caste Hindus. One woman out of every six in this land is a widow, and nearly four hundred thousand girls under fifteen years of age belong to this class, their lot often being pitiable in the extreme. It is characteristic of St. Luke to call attention to widows (Luke ii. 37; iv. 25; vii. 12; xviii. 3, 5; xx. 47; xxi. 2, 3; Acts ix. 39, 41).

The daily ministrations] Literally 'in the daily service' (*διακονία*). Cf. xi. 29, where the same noun occurs with a somewhat similar meaning (relief). From it is derived our word 'deacon' (*διδάκωνος*). It may be employed of any kind of ministry or service (cf. v. 4; i. 17, 25; xii. 25; xx. 24; xxi. 19), but is used here of the distribution of alms and food. Such philanthropic duties are an integral part of the ministry of Christ's Church, and are to be conscientiously discharged with all love and impartiality.

2. The twelve] The twelve apostles, as the leaders of the community, were immediately responsible for its well-being. Apparently, they recognized the grievance as a real one; and they took steps at once to deal with it.

The multitude of the disciples] They summoned a meeting of the general company of believers who were now, literally, a 'multitude' (iv. 4; v. 14), and took conference with them. This was better than taking action solely on their own initiative, and suggests the advisability, on the part of Church authorities and clergy, of taking counsel, in matters of importance, with their flock. We find the same plan still adopted at a later date (xv. 22). The general laity have a real and important part to play, alike in counsel and co-operation, in the organization and extension of the Church.

Forsake the word of God] We have already met with the same verb in ii. 31. It is a strong one, and suggests that the work of disbursing funds and distributing food had grown to such

the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and

large dimensions that it left the apostles little or no time for the more important duties of their office. Missionaries in a land like India know only too well how easy it is to become so completely absorbed in a routine of financial business, correspondence, and secular duties, as to leave little time for directly evangelistic and spiritual work. Yet the earnest study and preaching of God's word are indispensable to such a calling.

Serve tables] The verb 'serve' (*διακονεῖν*) is cognate with the noun rendered 'ministration' in v. 1, and, along with that, led to the employment of the word deacon to denote the office of those appointed as ministers for the distribution of alms. The word 'table' probably denotes public messes or united meals, but may also refer to the board or counter at which the alms were distributed, whether in the form of food or money (cf. Matt. xxi. 12). The expression 'serving of tables' has, from this, come to mean the discharge, by ministers, of a routine of secular duties. It is contrasted, in v. 4, with the 'ministry (serving) of the word'.

3. Look ye out . . . from among you] The apostles exercised a wise discretion in committing the election of these assistant-ministers to the community at large. The discontent of the Hellenistic party reflected, indirectly at least, on them, as those ultimately responsible for the distribution of charity (iv. 35). So far from resenting the implied accusation, they readily acknowledged the existence of a grievance and acted both graciously and unselfishly. It takes two parties to make a quarrel, and, so far from being mortified, the apostles met the charge in the spirit of love and forbearance. We have here an excellent example of the way in which to meet provocation and to avoid divisions. Self-abnegation, not self-justification, is the law of Christian love and wisdom (Rom. xii. 21). Much of the racial and caste spirit which we have to deplore in India, even in the Christian Church, would disappear if we would all act on this clear precedent.

Seven men] 'Seven' was a sacred number among the Hebrews

Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, 6 and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set

and savoured of completeness. It tallies, too, with the number of persons appointed to transact public business for the community in Jewish towns, as we learn from the Mishna (a compilation of Jewish laws and traditions). The Church at Rome, in the early centuries of Christianity, confined the number of her deacons to seven, in literal conformity with the precedent of this chapter.

Of good report] Literally, ' (well) attested ', i.e., well reported of by all who knew them (cf. x. 22; xvi. 2; xxii. 12; where the same word occurs). Only those whose character and conduct are beyond reproach are qualified to undertake any office in the Church of Christ. The greatest care is needed, in this respect, in the selection of ministers and workers.

Full of the Spirit] See Introduction vi. 1. The grace and power of the Holy Ghost are needed for integrity of life and honest management of funds, as well as for the effectual preaching of the Gospel.

Wisdom] The necessity for holy 'wisdom' had been abundantly shewn by the situation that had arisen (v. 1). These men would have to act prudently in order to obviate the possibility of further friction in the community. A lack of discretion would be fatal to the welfare of the work which lay before them. True wisdom is God's gracious gift (Jas. i. 5) and is indispensable to His service.

Over this business] We may, perhaps, better render it 'over this needful business'. Though the noun may be used of an office, its normal meaning in the New Testament is 'need' or 'necessity' (cf. ii. 45; iv. 35; xx. 34; xxviii. 10). A case of real necessity had arisen, and the appointment of the Seven was to meet the need. While, moreover, the apostles were to be set free for higher work, the discharge of these more secular duties by efficient persons was also necessary.

4. Continue steadfastly] See 1. 14; 2. 42, 46, where the same word occurs, implying steadfast perseverance and earnest

before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

continuance. These are thus singled out as of paramount importance in the Christian ministry.

In prayer and in the ministry of the word] 'Prayer' (see i. 14; ii. 42), both private and public, points to special fellowship with God, and is the means whereby we seek and receive His grace and power for life and service. Here, as in 1. 14, the definite article is prefixed, as though to mark prayer of a specific kind. Just as they had sought and found the Spirit's power by earnest prayer, so they needed, in the self-same way to seek and obtain a continuance of His help.

'The ministry of the word' is God's appointed means for the salvation of men and the edification of His people.

We cannot lay too great stress on prayer and preaching. While other things must needs be done, and organization duly attended to, these are of supreme importance. We receive God's power by the prayer of faith, and use it for His glory in the ministry of the word.

5. Pleased the whole multitude] The proposal was acceptable to all, Hebrews and Hellenists alike. Thus threatened division was averted and unanimity secured.

Stephen] His name means 'crown' or 'chaplet', an appropriate one for the saint, who was the first member of the Christian Church to win a martyr's crown.

Full of faith and of the Holy Spirit] He is thus distinguished above the rest by a special description of his personal endowment of spiritual gifts. The new assistants were all to be 'full of the Spirit and of wisdom' (v. 3). Stephen, in addition to this (v. 10), is marked out by his strong faith, which enabled him to dare and do for God above his fellows, as his history clearly shews. We read further, in v. 8, that he was 'full of grace and power'.

And Philip, etc.] Philip well follows Stephen, as his later history shews. Of the other five, we know nothing beyond what is recorded in this chapter. Some have thought, on the

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly;

strength of an early tradition, that Nicolas was the originator of the sect of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2. 6, 15), but this is more than doubtful.

We notice that the names of the seven are all Greek, not Hebrew, and we may fairly conclude that all alike were chosen from the Hellenistic party. If so, the election marks the triumph of the spirit of love and liberality, for they were clearly chosen by the united suffrage of the whole Church. All ground for discontent on the part of the Grecian Jews was thus removed in the most magnanimous manner possible, by the appointment of members of their own section as almoners of the entire community. Doubtless, also, this measure was a link in an important chain of events making for a wider catholicity in the views and labours of the Christian body, for the new ministers were in touch, by their birth and training, with the Gentile world outside. One of them, indeed, Nicolas, was himself a convert, first to Judaism and then to Christianity, from among the heathen (ii. 11, note). He is thus the first actual convert who became a Christian minister, and therefore is an object of special interest to us in India, where we have many clergy who were once Hindus or Muhammadans. The fact that he hailed from Antioch is also noteworthy, for the congregation of that city was to become the great missionary Church (for Antioch, see xi. 19, note). It is noticeable all through the Acts how signally God's blessing rested on every step in the direction of wider love and further extension of the Gospel. We are clearly in the line of His will when we enlarge our sympathy and refuse to be bound by the trammels of race or caste.

6. **Whom they set before the apostles]** While the election was left to the whole congregation, it was confirmed by the apostles who also exercised the power of ordination. We see, here, the necessity for due order and the benefit of organized authority.

When they had prayed] Cf. v. 4. It was no mere theory on the part of the apostles that they were called to a life and work

and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

demanding constant prayer. They at once put their theory into practice, and sought God's special blessing on the momentous step which they were about to take. We find prayer again preceding the laying on of hands in xiii. 3; just as it had preceded the election of Matthias to the apostolate in i. 24.

They laid their hands on them] We find the laying on of hands used in the New Testament:

- (a) As an act of benediction. Matt. xix. 13. 15; Mark x. 16.
- (b) As a sign of healing. Mark v. 23; vi. 5; vii. 32; viii. 23, 25; Luke iv. 40; xiii. 13.
- (c) As a symbol of the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Acts viii. 17. 19; ix. 17; xix. 6.
- (d) As a token of ordination to special service. Acts. vi. 6; xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14; (v. 22); 2 Tim. i. 6.

It is, of course, in the last of these connexions that the words are employed in this passage. The Seven were thus authoritatively set apart for their new ministry by this solemn act and ceremony. Though the instances of laying on of hands for ordination recorded in the New Testament are not numerous, they are sufficient to shew that the rite was practised from the very first: and it can be proved that, in the post-apostolic Church, the practice was universal. As the Seven are nowhere actually styled 'deacons' it has been questioned whether we are to look for the first establishment of that office to the narrative of this chapter. It is pointed out (1) that the qualifications laid down for deacons in 1 Tim. iii. 8-10 differ from those laid down for the Seven; (2) that Stephen and Philip, at least, were preachers and evangelists; and (3) that the Seven take rank next to the apostles and correspond largely in position with the presbyters whom we find at Jerusalem at a later date. On the whole, however, making allowance for differences which appear as Church organization expanded and developed, we may reasonably suppose that we have, in this chapter, the first establishment of that order of ministry which came to be styled

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. But there arose

specifically the diaconate (Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8). The functions which devolved on deacons were substantially the same as those which the Seven were appointed to exercise, and the identity of the two orders has been asserted from the earliest times.

7. The word of God increased] That is, it became more widely diffused, particularly as the apostles were freed from other duties for the work of preaching. Cf. xii. 24; xix. 20, where practically the same phrase occurs. In all these instances it will be seen that the expansion of the work followed on a definite attempt of Satan to mar and hinder it. In each case he overreached himself, and God's Holy Spirit overruled the opposition for good.

A great company of the priests] Consisting, we may suppose, chiefly of members of the Pharisaic party. The fact that a number of priests, who had a vested interest in Judaism, were converted speaks loudly of the power and progress of the Gospel.

Were obedient to the faith] This may mean either that they submitted themselves to faith in Jesus Christ, i.e., became believers; or that they 'gave in their adherence to the religion of Christ' characterized as 'the Faith' (cf. xiii. 8). The imperfect tense of the verb points to a continual accession of such converts.

8-15. STEPHEN PREACHING

8. Stephen] His figure occupies the foreground in the narrative which follows. He was God's special instrument for spreading the Gospel among the foreign Jews present in Jerusalem, and was the cause of the wide dispersion which followed (viii. 1, 4). It is clearly God's missionary purpose which dominates the history. In many respects, St. Stephen was undoubtedly the forerunner of St. Paul. Each in turn carried the war into the Hellenistic camp; confronted congregations in Jewish synagogues; encountered the opposition and fury of Hebrew bigots; was treated

certain of them that weré of the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and

with violence, insulted, and stoned. The mantle of Stephen fell on Saul of Tarsus, one of his most bitter opponents, who probably owed some of his earliest convictions of the truth to the testimony and example of the protomartyr. No one can fully estimate the results of the work of one man who has the courage to do and dare for what is true and right at any cost.

Full of grace and power] Cf. vv. 3-5. The order of the words is to be noted, first 'grace' and then 'power'. Many seek the Holy Spirit's gifts of endowments apart from His grace. But God's free love and favour, with all that graciousness of character (see ii. 47; iv. 33) which it produces in the sincere recipient, is the real prelude to a special enduement with His power. Holiness of character must lie behind evangelistic gifts.

Wrought great wonders and signs] Imperfect tense, 'continued doing great wonders, etc'. The power was manifested in mighty deeds. For 'wonders and signs', see ii. 22, note.

9. But there arose] New progress is met by new opposition. The Hellenistic preacher is confronted with Hellenistic antagonists.

The synagogue] A synagogue (gathering-together) was the place where Jewish communities assembled for the reading of their sacred Scriptures and public worship. We do not know when they first came into vogue, but have reason to suppose that they existed from the period of the Persian domination of Palestine. During apostolic times, every Jewish community had its own synagogue, and we shall frequently have occasion to notice them in the history of the Acts. In Jerusalem they were very numerous, each section of foreign Hebrews having a synagogue of their own, quite apart from those used by the natives of the city. The people who attended such a place of worship were called 'sons of the synagogue'. Each synagogue had its rosh, i.e. head or ruler, who maintained order and arranged for the conduct of public worship. It had also a cházan or attendant, who had charge of the building.

of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia,
10 disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to

and was responsible for its furnishings. It fell to him, too, to hand the roll of the Scriptures to the reader and to assist in the service in subordinate ways. Sometimes, moreover, he officiated as schoolmaster for the instruction of the children of the congregation. The service consisted chiefly in readings from the Pentateuch and Prophets, with a translating of the original Hebrew into the vernacular (in the case of the Aramaic synagogues), together with stated prayers, etc. An exposition of the lesson or sermon was added when competent speakers were present. The synagogue sometimes consisted of two apartments, the one being used for worship, while the other served for purposes of education and discussion. Our verse speaks of several synagogues belonging to various sections of foreign Jews.

The Libertines] Meaning 'freedmen'. Pompey had carried off a large number of Jews as prisoners to Rome in 63 B.C., and had sold them as slaves. Most of them, as we learn from Philo of Alexandria, afterwards obtained their freedom, being either emancipated by their masters or ransomed by their fellow-countrymen. They thus became, in Roman language, 'freedmen' (libertini), and some of them or their descendants returned to their fatherland. The synagogue here spoken of doubtless refers to this community of freed Roman slaves, who had, on account of certain disabilities, to erect a place of worship of their own.

The Cyrenians] Representatives, in Jerusalem, of the Jewish colony in Cyrene, a city of the African Lybian province. See ii. 10, note.

The Alexandrians] Representatives of the Jewish colony at Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great 332 B.C., and called by his name. It was the emporium of the commerce of the East and West. It passed into Roman hands in the year 30 B.C., and exported large quantities of corn to Italy, being in fact, the granary of Rome. The Jews were very numerous and influential there, occupying a separate quarter of their own. The corn trade with Italy was largely

withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard 11

in their hands. Alexandria was the metropolis, so to speak, of Hellenistic Judaism, and it was there that Jewish scholars of the dispersion made such strenuous efforts to represent their religious tenets in the terms of Greek philosophy.

Them of Cilicia] A district in the south-east of Asia Minor, contiguous to Syria, with which it had close political and national as well as geographical connexions. It consisted of two parts, the western one being mountainous and inhabited by a fierce and rugged people, ruled by a local sovereign. The eastern part, on the contrary, consisted of a fertile plain between the sea and the mountains (Taurus and Amanus), peopled by civilized and peaceful inhabitants who were directly subject to Roman rule. It formed part of the Roman province of Syria-Cilicia-Phoenicia. It is to this Roman Cilicia that allusion is here made. We know from the writings of Philo that there was a large Jewish colony there. Its principal city was Tarsus (see ix. 11, note). As Saul was from that district, he was doubtless a member, and a most prominent one, of the Cilician synagogue; and we may reasonably suppose that he was one of Stephen's principal opponents (see vii. 58).

Asia] See ii. 9, note.

We have thus five groups of foreign Jews enumerated here, one from Europe, two from Africa, and two from Asia. The champion of the Gospel was thus face to face with the representatives of three continents. Either he confronted them one by one, each in their own synagogue; or else, stirred by a common impulse, they combined as one body to resist the power of Christianity. It is interesting to note that there are a few Jewish synagogues in India. Notably, there are two distinct ones at Cochin on the Malabar coast, the one peculiar to those who bear the name of 'white Jews', the other used only by the so-called 'black Jews', who are supposed to have been originally slaves of the former, though they are now free. They may be seen to this day each conducting their stated worship on the lines of the old synagogues of Palestine.

him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and **12** *against* God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized

Disputing] The very word used in ix. 29 of St. Paul's religious disputations with the Hellenistic Jews after his conversion, possibly in one or other of the same synagogues. Thus Stephen's opponent became his true successor. The annals of missionary work in India will furnish us with similar examples of the transformation of strong opponents into Christian preachers. To quote only one instance, one of Dr. Pfander's controversial opponents, the Maulavi Imád-ud-din, afterwards became a zealous Christian clergyman, well known in the Panjab.

10. The wisdom and the Spirit] Cf. the phrases 'the Spirit and wisdom' (v. 3); 'faith and the Holy Spirit' (v. 5); and 'grace and power' (v. 8). Taken together they shew us the wealth of St. Stephen's spiritual equipment for his special work. The 'wisdom' spoken of is no mere earthly lore and learning, but a heavenly gift, promised by Christ Himself to His servants. See Luke xxi. 15, where also the verb 'resist' of this verse occurs. The Bezan text adds, after 'spake', the words, 'because they were convicted by him with all boldness. Therefore, not being able to face the truth, they suborned men'.

11. Suborned men] That is, 'procured them for purposes of false witness'. The Greek word also suggests that they 'secretly instructed' them. It is not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

We have heard him speak, etc.] Their witness, of course, was false. Stephen was following in the steps of that Master who had been unjustly accused of blasphemy (Matt. ix. 3; John x. 36), and against whom, also, false witnesses were arraigned (Matt. xxvi. 59-61). It is clear, however, from the whole narrative, that the evangelist had gone further than the apostles in claiming for the Gospel 'unfettered liberty and universal rights' (Lightfoot); and this, doubtless, formed the substratum of truth on which the false accusations were

him, and brought him into the council, and set up false **13**
witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak
words against this holy place, and the law : for we have **14**
heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy

founded. We notice that Stephen's Jewish opponents, in their sectarian zeal, put their lawgiver Moses even before God (against Moses and against God).

12. The people] Who had, hitherto, not been unfavourable to the Christian preachers (ii. 47 ; iii. 9, 11, 12 ; iv. 1, 2, 17, 21 ; v. 12, 13, 20, 25, 26 ; vi. 8).

We mark here a distinct change in the attitude of the populace, who were now wrought into excitement by the appeals made to their religious pride and prejudice.

The elders and the scribes] See iv. 5, note. The Sanhedrists and their adherents had already taken up an actively hostile attitude (v. 33, 40), and would be only too ready to join the fray.

Came upon him] As in iv. 1. Cf. Luke xx. 1.

Seized] The word is expressive of much violence, 'they seized and dragged him along'. It is found again only in Luke viii. 29 ; Acts xix. 29 ; xxvii. 15, and so is a distinctively Lukan word.

Council] That is, the Sanhedrin (iv. 5, note).

13. Against this holy place and the law] Stephen had probably insisted, in his preaching, that the worship of God could not be confined within the walls of any temple (vii. 49-50), and that the law and the prophets pointed on to the Lord Jesus Christ (vii. 52-3), who had fulfilled them and ushered in a new and world-wide dispensation. The false witnesses perverted his doctrines and misrepresented them. Here, again, he was following in the steps of Christ (John ii. 19, 20 ; Mark xiv. 58). Misrepresentation of the statements of others is always evil, and it is criminal when it is done wilfully and maliciously.

14. This Jesus of Nazareth] See ii. 22, note. Here the words are spoken contemptuously, 'Jesus, this Nazarene'. It is clear

this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. And all that sat in the council,

that He had been the centre and the substance of St. Stephen's preaching.

Shall destroy this place] Cf. the charge against Christ Himself (Mark xiv. 58). 'This place' denotes, of course, the Jewish temple. The very fact that such a charge was brought shews that the preacher had used words which were, in some sense, an echo of John iv. 21-23. He had distinct conceptions of a wider theocracy and of a more spiritual and universal worship.

The customs] A specially Lukan word (Luke i. 9; ii. 42; xxii. 39; Acts xv. 1; xvi. 21; xxi. 21; xxv. 16; xxvi. 3), only occurring in two other places outside his writings (John xix. 40; Heb. x. 25). It will be seen, on examining the references, that, with the one exception of Luke xxii. 39, he always employs it of national or ecclesiastical customs or traditionary institutions. The Jews were, of all men, the most exclusive in a zealous adherence to national customs and religious usages, and their Rabbis had elaborated the rules prescribed in the law of Moses into a rigid system of minute practices which were regarded as strictly binding and which entered into every department of life, religious, social, and domestic. In some respects, the Hindu system of caste presents a rough parallel. St. Stephen had evidently perceived, in greater or less degree, that the love and grace of God cannot be confined within the narrow channels of race or caste or custom, but embraces all men; though we may be quite sure that, in setting forth this wide comprehensiveness of the Gospel of Christ, he had said nothing really derogatory of the law of Moses. The speech which follows in the next chapter proves him a true Jew in his respect for the religion and history of his fathers, while he yet saw a vista of nobler and wider blessing opening out before the Christian Church. Let us beware of putting our 'customs' into the place of the law of Christ as declared in the New Testament.

15. All that sat in the council] All the Sanhedrists (iv. 5, note). Stephen would be standing, as the accused, in

fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

front of the semi-circle of seats on which the councillors were sitting.

Fastening their eyes] See i. 10, where the same verb is found.

As it had been the face of an angel] Reference to angels is characteristic of St. Luke. This is the only mention in the New Testament of 'the face of an angel', and we may understand it as indicating that St. Stephen's face was seen to be radiant and glorious with a celestial holiness and brightness (see Matt. xxviii. 3). We may compare the glory visible in the face of Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 35; 2 Cor. iii. 7), and that which shone in our Saviour's countenance on the Transfiguration mount (Matt. xvii. 2; Luke ix. 29). See also vii. 55, 56. St. Peter tells us that 'the Spirit of glory' rests upon the man who is persecuted for the name of Christ (1 Pet. iv. 14).

TEACHING OF CHAPTER VI

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) Internal dangers. vv. 1-7. Harmony threatened.
- (2) External attacks. vv. 8-15. Enmity provoked.

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) *The new organization.* vv. 1-7. Its advantages.
 - (a) It preserved unity. vv. 1-3.
 - (b) It divided labour. vv. 2-4.
 - (c) It evinced unselfishness. vv. 2, 3, 5.
 - (d) It increased harmony. v. 5.
 - (e) It respected authority. v. 6.
 - (f) It promoted efficiency. v. 7.
 - (g) It proved successful. v. 7.
- (2) *The earnest evangelist.* vv. 8-15. His characteristics.
 - (a) Spiritual power. v. 8.
 - (b) Heavenly wisdom. v. 10.
 - (c) Catholic sympathy. vv. 11-14.
 - (d) Dauntless courage. vv. 12-15. (calm in danger).
 - (e) Burning zeal. v. 13. (ceaseth not to speak).
 - (f) Personal holiness. v. 15. (face of an angel).

2 And the high priest said, Are these things so? And he said,

Brethren and fathers, hearken. The God of glory

CHAPTER VII

1-53. STEPHEN'S SPEECH

Stephen had been specifically, though falsely, charged with speaking against the sacred law and the holy temple of the Jews (vi. 13, 14), which, to their minds, were indissolubly bound up with the chosen race and the promised land. In his defence, the preacher takes up these points and speaks, in a truly patriotic spirit, as well of the election and history of the Hebrew race as of their possession of the land of promise (vv. 2-16; 45). He also deals with the giving of the law and the building of the temple (vv. 17-41; 44-5). In so doing, he lays stress upon certain important facts which bore directly upon the points at issue between himself and his accusers.

- (a) Their own history proves abundantly that God's presence and glory cannot be confined to any place, however sacred (vv. 2, 9, 16, 29, 38, 44).
- (b) It proves, also, that, as a race, they had constantly resisted God's chosen messengers, just as they were now resisting and rejecting the last and greatest of those messengers, the Christ Himself (vv. 9; 22-9; 35-40; 51-3).
- (c) It demonstrates the fact, again, that law and temple and every sacred institution are capable of abuse, and may become, by such abuse, worse than useless; spirit and truth being infinitely more important than external rites and ordinances (vv. 42-3; 48-50).
- (d) It makes it quite clear, once more, that Christ, the Messiah, is the goal of the law and the prophets, and that, in accepting Him, the true Jew fulfils the purpose of the God of his fathers and the sacred destiny of his race (vv. 5, 37, 52).

2. **Brethren and fathers]** We mark the speaker's deference and courtesy (cf. iv. 8, note).

appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said 3

The word 'brethren' may denote the majority of his audience; 'fathers', the officials and seniors of the Sanhedrin.

The God of glory] Literally 'The God of the (manifested) glory'. The exact expression occurs in Ps. xxix. 3 (LXX). It would suggest to Jewish hearers memories of Sinai, the Shecinah, and other great theophanies.

Appeared unto our father Abraham] Stephen speaks, in his address, with evident reverence of some of the chief 'fathers' of the race, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon. We learn from Joshua xxiv. 2 that Abraham sprang from a family of idolaters. He was, therefore, a convert to the worship of the true and living God. It is interesting to us, in India, to trace the blessing vouchsafed to this sincere convert and his posterity, and, through them, to the whole world.

- (a) We read here that the appearance of God to Abraham was prior to his removal to Haran, and this accords well with the notices contained in Gen. xv. 7; Joshua xxiv. 3; Neh. ix. 7; Philo and Josephus also agree.
- (b) In Gen. xii. 1-5, however, it seems to be implied, following as it does on xi. 31, 32, that God appeared to him in Haran.
- (c) There can scarcely be any doubt that Abraham's departure from his original home was the result, as here stated, of a divine communication (cf. Gen. xi. 31, 'to go into the land of Canaan'). It would seem, therefore, from Gen. xii. 1-4, that the original communication was renewed in Haran. God's later promises and blessings to Abraham were similarly reduplicated and renewed (see Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 14-17; xvii. 15-16; xviii. 10). We note that this divine revelation was given in Mesopotamia, a heathen land, not in the land of promise.

In Mesopotamia] See ii. 9, note. The home of Abraham's ancestors was east of the river Euphrates (Joshua xxiv. 2, 3) in a place called 'Ur of the Chaldees' (Gen. xi. 31). This is

unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.
 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and

usually identified with Edessa, the modern Urfa or Orfa, formally called Orrha, in the north-western corner of Mesopotamia. The chief mosque of the Muhammadans there is called 'the mosque of Abraham', as their traditions have uniformly pointed out Urfa as the patriarch's original home.

Others think, however, that the modern Mugheir, a town of S. Babylonia, about 125 miles N. W. of the Persian Gulf, is the place in question; its original name having been Uru. It was a great centre of moon-worship, as was also Haran, to which Abraham and his father first migrated.

Another opinion has been advanced that 'Ur of the Chaldees' was the name of a country rather than of a city, and denoted the whole land of Accad, called also Ura, in N. Babylonia.

Before he dwelt in Haran] See Gen. xi. 31-2. Haran was situated S. E. of Edessa, on a branch of the Euphrates, in the N. W. of Mesopotamia. It was a famous centre of moon worship.

3. Get thee out of, etc.] These words agree verbatim with part of Gen. xii. 1 (LXX.). On the supposition that there were two appearances to Abraham, the one in Ur and the other in Haran, the later communication repeated the earlier one and amplified it (cf. Jonah i. 2; iii. 2).

4. When his father was dead] Cf. Gen. xi. 32; xii. 5. A difficulty arises here owing to the notices of the ages of Terah and Abraham.

(a) When Terah died at the age of 205 (Gen. xi. 32), his son Abraham was seventy-five years old (Gen. xii. 4). This would make him 130 years of age when Abraham was born.

(b) But we read 'Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran' (Gen. xi. 26). If these words denote the order of birth, then Abraham was the eldest son, born when his father was seventy

dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, *God* removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell: and he gave him none inheritance in 5 it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he promised that he would give it to him in possession, and

years old. Since seventy and seventy-five make 145 only, there are then sixty years of Terah's life left unaccounted for; and from this many have concluded that he lived still sixty years after the departure of his son from Haran to Canaan, a conclusion which is clearly at variance with our text.

- (c) It is possible, however, that Abraham was really the youngest son of Terah, though his name is placed first in the list because of the precedence of fame and honour, and that he was not born till Terah was 130 years of age or thereabouts. In this case, the apparent difficulty would disappear. There are other instances of such an order of precedence in names in the Old Testament. We may observe, also, that the statement of this verse is supported by Philo, the famous Jewish teacher of Alexandria.

Removed him] The same verb occurs again in v. 43, where it is rendered 'carry you away'. It means 'caused you to migrate'. *This* was a migration of grace; *that* (v. 43) of judgement.

5. Gave him none inheritance and promised] Cf. Heb. xi. 8-14. The latter part of the verse is an echo of Gen. xvij. 8; xlvi. 4, some of the very phrases here used being found in the LXX version. The word 'possession' only occurs again in the New Testament in v. 45. Stephen reminds his hearers that the land of promise, in which they made their boast, was God's free gift to them.

6. God spake on this wise] The reference in this and the following verse is to Gen. xv. 13, 14, from which these words are, substantially, quoted.

The words and phrases are largely identical with those of the LXX. The 'strange land' is, of course, Egypt. The word

to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.
6 And God spake on this wise, that his seed should
 sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring
 them into bondage, and entreat them evil, four hundred
7 years. And the nation to which they shall be in

'sojourner' occurs, as here, in noun form in v. 29; Eph. ii. 19; 1 Pet. ii. 11.

Four hundred years] A period given, probably, in round numbers. In Exod. xii. 40, we find the duration of Israel's sojourning stated to be 430 years (cf. Gal. iii. 17). Josephus mentions both these numbers. Possibly both may be correct, as reckoned from different initial dates; but, in any case, we shall not be far wrong if we regard 430 as the exact figure and 400 as a round number.

Philo, like Stephen, gives the latter total, 400.

The period of 430 years may be computed as follows:—

	years.
Abraham's arrival in Canaan to birth of Isaac ..	25
Isaac's age at the birth of Jacob ..	60
Jacob's age on going to Egypt ..	130
	215
	215
	years.
Jacob's arrival in Egypt to death of Joseph ..	71
Joseph's death to birth of Moses ..	64
Birth of Moses to the Exodus ..	80
	215
	215

And twice 215 = 430.

7. Serve Me in this place] The reference would seem to be to Exod. iii. 12, which, in his rapid survey of patriarchal history, Stephen purposely affixed to his quotation from Gen. xv. 13, 14. If so, it denotes Mount Sinai, and may suggest the speaker's intention of shewing the people, from their own history, that God's worship could not be confined to their own land and temple.

bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt: and God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him

8. The covenant of circumcision] Upon which the Jews laid such great stress. Circumcision was the 'seal' (Rom. iv. 11) of God's covenant with Abraham and his lineal descendants, and marked their new and special relationship to Him. Stephen, wisely called attention to it. At the same time, his whole address insists on the fact that external rites alone are of no avail. In God's spiritual meaning of the word, his hearers were still uncircumcised (v. 51).

9. Patriarchs] See ii. 29, note.

Moved with jealousy against Joseph] For the history of vv. 9-16, see Genesis, chapters, xxxvii-1. The verb 'moved with jealousy' occurs again in xvii. 5, shewing that the evil spirit displayed by the patriarchs still lived on in their descendants. St. Stephen, while dwelling with patriotic enthusiasm on the glories of the past, yet points out that even their most revered ancestors were fallible men and sometimes opposed what was good and true. He also, doubtless, saw in the story of Joseph an illustration of the nation's blindness to God's gracious purposes, and a type of their rejection of the Christ (v. 52).

Do not let a false sense of patriotism, whether we be Indians or Europeans, blind us to our national sins and failures.

God was with him] Even in heathen Egypt; another proof, from their own annals, that His person and blessing are 'within no walls confined'.

10. His afflictions] The very word used of the troubles which befell his brethren a little later (v. 11). They caused 'afflictions'

favour and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent forth our fathers the first time. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's race became manifest unto Pharaoh. And Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen to him; and 'afflictions' overtook them. 'Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap' (Gal. vi. 7).

Favour and wisdom] Literally 'grace and wisdom'. See vi. 8, 10, notes. We may understand the 'grace' either of God's free favour and help; or, as in the text, of the 'favour' which Joseph found in the eyes of Pharaoh.

12. Corn in Egypt] And so it came to pass that they had to go from the land of promise to seek sustenance in an alien country. God's provision for His favoured people was made outside the domains of their inheritance.

13. Called to him] A verb peculiar to the Acts 'called to come over to where he was' (x. 32; xx. 17; xxiv. 25).

14. Threescore and fifteen souls] The number is given as seventy in Gen. xlvi. 27; Exod. i. 5; Deut. x. 22, inclusive of Jacob and Joseph. In the LXX. version of Gen. xlvi. 27; Exod. i. 5, however, the total is stated at seventy-five, though it remains seventy in the LXX. of Deut. x. 22. The total is made up to seventy-five in the LXX. by the addition of the names, in the list of Gen. xlvi. 8-27, of Manasseh's son Machir and grandson Galaad or Gilead (Machir's son), with Ephraim's sons Shuthelah or Soutalaam and Taam (Tahath), and his grandson Edom or Elead (Soutalaam's son). Cf. the list in 1 Chron. vii. 14-22. Stephen, as a Hellenistic Jew, of course quoted the LXX. as his vernacular version of the Scriptures, just as a Hindi

souls. And Jacob went down into Egypt; and he died, 15 himself, and our fathers; and they were carried over 16 unto Shechem, and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a price in silver of the sons of 1 Gr. *Emmor.* 17 Hamor in Shechem. But as the time of

or Tamil-speaking evangelist in India to-day would quote from his vernacular Bible and not from the Hebrew original.

16. They were carried over unto Shechem] It is not clear what persons were included in the 'they' in the mind of the speaker.

- (a) Jacob was buried not in Shechem but in the cave of Macpelah at Hebron (Gen. 1st 13).
- (b) Joseph, however, was interred at Shechem, according to the statement of this verse (Joshua xxiv. 32); and we must remember that it is more especially of Joseph that Stephen is speaking at the time.
- (c) We have no account in the Bible of the burying place of the other sons of Jacob, and too much reliance cannot be placed on the statement of Josephus that it was at Hebron (Antiq. II. viii. 2), as it may only represent an unfounded tradition. If their bones were carried, like Joseph's, from Egypt, it would be natural for them to be laid with his at Shechem. Jerome tells us that, in his time, the reputed 'Tombs of the Twelve Patriarchs' were shewn in Shechem.

Be this as it may, Joseph at least was interred in Shechem, and it is his figure which, for the moment, fills St. Stephen's field of vision. Shechem, being in Samaria, and so distasteful to the Jews, would remind them once more that the sacred places of their race were by no means confined to Jerusalem.

That Abraham bought, etc.] Here two different transactions appear to be run together, so to speak.

- (a) Abraham, we read, bought a piece of ground in Hebron, containing the cave of Macpelah, from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. xxiii. 14-20).

the promise drew nigh, which God vouchsafed unto Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 18 till there arose another king over Egypt, which knew 19 not Joseph. The same dealt subtilly with our race, and evil entreated our fathers, that ¹they should cast out their babes to the end they

¹ Or, he.

(b) Jacob, at a later period, purchased a parcel of ground at Shechem from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father (Gen. xxxiii. 18-20). This latter purchase may have had reference to the fact that Abraham had built his first altar there on first entering Canaan (Gen. xii. 6, 7), a fact which would make the place seem sacred in the eyes of his descendants.

It would seem that our verse, as it stands, gives a sort of 'composite photograph' of these two distinct events. The most natural explanation is that, in speaking of two purchase transactions and two places of burial, the speaker, perhaps in the very rapidity of his historical review, blended them into one. His mind was set on great issues rather than on little details. Most of his hearers, we must remember, were fully conversant with all the facts of their national history. From Stephen's point of view at the moment, the real stress is to be laid on Joseph and Shechem.

18. Another king] For the history of vv. 17-41, see Exodus, chapters i-xxxii. The king in question is thought to be Rameses II, of the nineteenth dynasty, who was pre-eminent as a builder. His son and successor, Merenptah, was, most likely, the Pharaoh of the Exodus. There is some ground, however, for regarding Thothmes III, of the eighteenth dynasty, as the Pharaoh of the captivity, and his son Amenotep III as the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

19. Dealt subtilly] The verb so translated occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is quoted from the LXX of Exod. i. 10, and means 'to employ guile and cunning against anyone'.

might not ¹live. At which season Moses was born, and ²⁰was ²exceeding fair; and he was nourished three months in his father's house: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of ²²the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works. ²³But when he was well-nigh forty years old,

¹ Gr. he preserved alive.
² Or, fair unto God.

21

22

23

Evil entreated] Or, more briefly, 'maltreated'. It is the same word as in v. 6 (entreat them evil). Thus the earlier prediction was literally fulfilled. We see that secret guile was followed by open violence. These are the two great weapons with which Satan ever assails God's Church.

They might not live] More literally, 'might not be preserved alive', as rendered in the margin. The verb is Paulo-Lukan, being only found again in Luke xvii. 33 and 1 Tim. vi. 13.

20. Exceeding fair] Literally, 'fair to (i.e., in the sight of) God', a Hebraism denoting excessive comeliness. The word 'fair', which occurs again in the New Testament only in Heb. xi. 23 (goodly), is taken from Exod. ii. 2 (LXX).

21. Pharaoh's daughter] Josephus calls her Thermutis, but her name is not mentioned in the Old Testament.

22. Was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians] The word 'instructed' is used again in xxii. 3, of St. Paul's education and training by Gamaliel. The statement of this verse is supplemental to the history of the Old Testament, but is what we should naturally expect of the education of the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. 'The wisdom of the Egyptians' was famous (1 Kings iv. 30), and included a knowledge of such sciences as astronomy, geometry, and medicine.

23. Well-nigh forty years old] A detail not mentioned in the Old Testament. We know that he was eighty years of age at the time of the Exodus (Exod. vii. 7), and a hundred and

it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children
 24 of Israel. And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he
 defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed,
 25 smiting the Egyptian: and he supposed that his brethren
 understood how that God by his hand was
 giving them ^{1 Or, sal-} deliverance; but they understood
 vation,

twenty when he died (Deut. xxxiv. 7). Thus his life was divided
 into three-times-forty years (see v. 30).

It came into his heart] Literally 'it came up on to his
 heart', a non-classical expression adopted from the LXX. in
 which it occurs several times (2 Kings xii. 4; Isa. lxxv. 17). We
 meet with it again in 1 Cor. ii. 9. It represents a Hebrew
 idiom. It is as though an idea which had lain dormant in
 the depths of Moses' mind suddenly rose up as a distinct plan
 and purpose, awakened into activity by a divine impulse.

To visit his brethren] See Exod. ii. 11. As Pharaoh's adopted
 son, so to speak, living in the highest circles of Egyptian
 society and culture, he must have been separated by a wide
 gulf from a race of oppressed slaves who, moreover, lived in
 a district of their own. Cf. Heb. xi. 24-6. The verb 'visit'
 implies looking kindly on the Israelites with intent to help
 and relieve them (Jas. i. 27). /

25. He supposed that] This, again, is a new feature in the
 history, not alluded to in the Old Testament.

Was giving them deliverance] The words mean that Moses
 thought that the Israelites would perceive that God was, then
 and there, commencing a work of deliverance, the slaughter
 of the Egyptian being the first act in the process of emancipa-
 tion.

But they understood not] Stephen purposely lays stress on
 the failure of the Hebrew race to recognize God's purposes and
 to accept His messengers (see also vv. 39, 51, 52, 53). Their acts
 of contumaciousness came to a climax in the rejection of Jesus
 the Messiah.

not. And the day following he appeared unto them 26 as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust 27 him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wouldest thou kill me, as thou killedst the 28 Egyptian yesterday? And Moses fled at this saying, 29 and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons. And when forty years were fulfilled, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. And when 31

26. Would have set them at one again] More simply 'he tried to reconcile them'. The verb is found only here in the New Testament.

27. Thrust him away] Another fact supplemental to the Old Testament history. The verb is found again in v. 39; xiii. 46; Rom. xi. 1, 2; 1 Tim. i. 19, and is one of many language links between St. Luke and St. Paul.

29. Fled at this saying] That is, the man's words were the occasion or reason of Moses' flight. We know, from Exod. ii. 15, that they reached the king's ears and roused his enmity.

Sojourner] See v. 6.

The land of Midian] A district including the north of Arabia and a stretch of country on the shore of the Gulf of Akabah (an arm of the Red Sea).

30. When forty years were fulfilled] See v. 23. The duration of his sojourn in Midian is not stated in the Old Testament; but this period of forty years, added to the forty years of his age at the time of his flight, would make him eighty years old at the epoch of the Exodus, in accordance with Exod. vii. 7.

Mount Sinai] In Exod. iii. 1, it is 'the mountain of God, Horeb'. Sinai and Horeb are probably used interchangeably in

Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold, there came a voice of the Lord, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of
 32 Isaac, and of Jacob. And Moses trembled, and durst
 33 not behold. And the Lord said unto him, Loose the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou
 34 standest is holy ground. I have surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I am come down to deliver them:
 35 and now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a

the Bible, the same mountain bearing both names. Otherwise, as some think, Horeb may be the name of the mountain chain, while Sinai denotes the particular peak.

31. The sight] An almost exclusively Lukan word. He uses it eleven times in the Acts (vii. 31; ix. 10, 12; x. 3, 17, 19; xi. 5; xii. 9; xvi. 9, 10; xviii. 9), whereas it is found only once elsewhere (Matt. xvii. 9). In the other passages of this book it is rendered 'vision'.

32. Moses trembled] The word rendered 'trembled' only occurs again in xvi. 29; Heb. xii. 21. It is thus used, invariably, in the New Testament, of trembling which is produced by the occurrence of supernatural phenomena.

33. Holy ground] 'Holy', because God was there, although it was a desert spot, without fane or temple. Stephen, doubtless, from the whole tenor of his speech, intended this fact to carry weight.

35. This Moses] Verses 35, 36, 37, 38 all begin with the demonstrative pronoun 'this'. Evidently the speaker wished to concentrate the attention of his hearers on Moses, and to emphasize the fact that, though the Jews professed to honour him so highly, they had, in reality, treated him very badly. The parallel between their treatment of the lawgiver

ruler and a judge? him hath God sent *to be* both a ruler and a ¹ deliverer with the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. 1 Gr. redeemer.

This man led them forth, having wrought wonders and signs in Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilder- 36
ness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto 37

and their rejection of the great Prophet of whom he spake was also, doubtless, in the speaker's mind.

Whom they refused] This fact is purposely reiterated (vv. 27, 28). It is the same word which is translated 'denied' in iii. 13, 14. As their forefathers had 'denied' Moses, so they had 'denied' the Christ.

Him hath God sent to be a ruler and deliverer] We are forcibly reminded of the similar argument used of our Lord in ii. 36; v. 30, 31. Stephen alters the phrase from 'ruler and judge' (v. 27, repeated in former part of this verse) to 'ruler and redeemer' (see margin). It speaks of the redemption of Israel from Egypt. The word 'redeemer' is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, but the cognate words 'redeem', 'redemption', and 'ransom' are used of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xx. 28; Luke i. 68; ii. 38; xxiv. 21; Titus ii. 14; Heb. ix. 12; 1 Pet. i. 18). In this respect, again, Moses' mission prefigured that of our Redeemer.

With the hand of the angel, etc.] Meaning 'with the enabling and protecting power of the Angel of the covenant'. Moses was not sent to execute his mission alone and in his own strength. God's presence and power were with him. We read of the Angel again in v. 38. /

36. Wonders and signs] Cf. ii. 22, where similar credentials are cited on behalf of Christ.

37. This is that Moses which said] St. Stephen calls special attention to Moses' great Messianic prophecy, as though to say 'You profess great reverence for Moses; then receive the Messiah-Prophet of whom Moses spake'. They had accused him of want of respect for Moses, whereas he had

the children of Israel, A prophet shall God raise up unto you from among your brethren,¹ like unto me. This is he that was in the ² church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our 39 fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us: to

really honoured the lawgiver in accepting the teacher whom he predicted. The quotation from Deut. xviii. 15 has already been used in iii. 22, which see.

38. The church in the wilderness] For 'church' see ch. v. 11, note. It denotes here the whole congregation of the Israelites journeying through the desert. Some consider that, having regard to the context, it refers specially to that congregation as assembled at Sinai for the promulgation of the Law.

With the angel which spake to him] Cf. v. 35. As there, so here also, it denotes the divine Angel of the covenant. The narrative in Exodus (Exod. xx. 1-21) makes it quite clear that it was God Himself who spake from Mount Sinai (cf. Gen. xlviii. 15, 16). In this verse, it is communication and association with the Angel which is intended. See Exod. xx. 21; xxiv. 12-16.

And with our fathers] While Moses was 'with the Angel', on the one hand, to receive the divine revelation, he was 'with' the Israelites, on the other hand, to communicate the revelation unto them. He was thus the mediator of the Sinaitic covenant (Deut. v. 22-31; Gal. iii. 19-20). In this mediatorship, again, his work foreshadowed Christ's (Heb. xii. 18-29).

Living oracles] That is, in effect, 'living words and utterances of revelation'. The word translated 'oracles' was used by the pagan Greeks of the (supposed) oracular utterances of their gods, in answer to the inquiries of their worshippers. It was then employed by the Greek translators of the Old Testament to represent divine utterances and communications. It is found

38 ¹ Or, as he raised up me.
² Or, congregation.

whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods which shall 40 go before us: for as for this Moses, which led us forth out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, 41

again in Rom. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 11. They are called 'living oracles' because of the divine power and life which lay behind them (cf. John vi. 63; Heb. iv. 12; 1 Pet. i. 23). Perhaps Stephen would hint to his hearers that the Law which they revered so highly was intended to be a spiritual and effective system, and not merely a dead and mechanical code, observed only with a scrupulous attention to the letter.

39. Would not be obedient] Literally, 'did not wish to be obedient'. The speaker emphasizes once more the stubborn disobedience of the Hebrew race. There was no room for them to boast of loyalty to Moses.

Thrust him from them] See v. 27, where the same word occurs. It is purposely reiterated here, in order to keep the rejection of Moses well in view.

Turned back in their hearts] See Exod. xvi. 3; Num. xi. 4, 5. They hankered after Egyptian pleasures and Egyptian idols, forgetting the bitterness of Egyptian bondage. Notice the stress laid on the heart. The root of all backsliding is found in the unhallowed desires of the heart (Prov. xiv. 14).

41. They made a calf] The word rendered 'calf', borrowed from the LXX, really means 'a young bull', and there can scarcely be any doubt that the golden image fashioned by Aaron assumed that special shape. The Egyptians worshipped the sacred bulls Apis and Mnevis, considered as incarnations of Osiris and the sun-god respectively, and the Israelites most probably learnt this form of idolatry from them. The bull is practically worshipped in India also, being specially associated with Siva. Bull images are to be seen near all Linga shrines; and it is regarded as an act of special merit to let loose a bull marked with Siva's

and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced **42** in the works of their hands. But God turned, and gave them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets,

trident in sacred cities like Benares. The veneration of the cow is even more pronounced. We notice the climax here indicated in the sin of Israel. (a) They made the bull-calf; (b) they brought a sacrifice to their idol; and (c) they rejoiced in the work of their hands (cf. Exod. xxxii. 17-19; 1 Cor. x. 7). Idolatry is, in its essence, treason against the true and living God. Active continuance in it is deeper treason still. Glorifying in it is the deepest treason of all. In the case of the Israelites, moreover, it was a deliberate sinning against light and knowledge.

42. God turned] The same verb as in v. 39. They 'turned' away from God, and so He 'turned' away from them; i.e., He changed His treatment of them, withholding His special favour and restraining grace from them (Cf. Joshua. xxiv. 20; Isa. lxiii. 10). All God's spiritual blessings are conditional on man's sincere acquiescence and obedience.

Gave them up] Cf. Rom. i. 24, 26, 28; Eph. iv. 19, where the same verb is used. When God's love and grace are deliberately spurned and refused, He has to leave man to himself and to the natural tendencies and consequences of his perverted will and choice (Hos. iv. 17). /

To serve the host of heaven] That is 'to worship the sun, moon, and stars'. We find references to such a worship in Deut. xvii. 3; 2 Kings xvii. 16; xxi. 3; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3; Job xxxi. 26-8; Jer. viii. 2; xix. 13. In Egypt, the sun was worshipped under the names Rā, Tum, etc.; the moon under the title Aah; while the planets also received special veneration. Similar systems prevailed among the Assyrians, Babylonians, etc. In India we have a like cultus. Even in Vedic times, the sun-god Sūrya or Savitṛī was one of the chief objects of worship; and, up to the present time, though there are no temples

Did ye offer unto me slain beasts and sacrifices
 Forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?
 And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, 43
 And the star of the god Rephan,

erected to his honour, the orthodox Hindu is expected to do homage daily to the rising sun, as he repeats the Gáyatri. The moon, though receiving less prominent attention, is yet regarded, under the name of Soma, as worthy of special honour, and the Hindu raises his hands in obeisance to her disc. The planets, on their part, constitute a most formidable group of deities, being supposed to influence man's destiny for good or evil. Astrology and horoscopes, as we all know well, are potent factors in the Indian world. Thus we see, everywhere, a tendency to 'worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator'.

The book of the prophets] According to the Hebrew reckoning, the twelve Minor Prophets form one Book, and it is from this Book that the quotation is taken which immediately follows.

Did ye offer, etc.] The passage is taken from Amos v. 25-7, almost verbatim according to the LXX version. The prophet, in these words, is rebuking the idolatry of the people of his day, warning them that punishment and captivity must be the inevitable result. In so doing, he refers to the idolatrous spirit of their fathers, only too manifest from the first days of their redemption from Egyptian slavery. The question 'Did ye offer unto Me?' does not imply that no sacrifices were offered to God, for we know from the history contained in the Pentateuch that there was an elaborate system of such sacrifices regularly observed. The prophet's intention is rather to convince the people that a divided heart vitiates even the most lawful worship. We are not really worshipping God if our hearts are set on other objects (Isa. i. 10-20; lxvi. 1-3; Ezek. xiv.:2-7; Matt. xv. 7-9).

43. Ye took up] The word in the original Hebrew of Amos is the one regularly employed of the priests and Levites 'bearing' the ark of God and the sacred tabernacle, and is, clearly, used

The figures which ye made to worship them :

And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto

here advisedly. There seems no reason to suppose, as many have done, that the Israelites actually carried about idol shrines with them in the wilderness. Indeed, it is improbable that the special idol-names here mentioned were known by them at the period in question. At the same time, we can well believe that the Egyptian worship of animals and of the heavenly bodies had infected them, and we know that a 'mixed multitude' went with them (Exod. xii. 38), including, doubtless, many Egyptians. Moses' action with regard to the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. 20) shews us the fate which would have befallen any other outward display of idolatry. There would be a constant tendency, it is true, to recur to Egyptian idolatry; and to the bull-worship which is mentioned in the history they may have added, from time to time, worship of the sun, moon, and stars. But all that the prophet's words really require us to believe is that their idolatrous tendencies vitiated the nobler worship which God had ordained, and made even sacred rites become, for them, vain and useless. The essence of idolatry lies in the heart and will and desires.

The tabernacle of Moloch] The word for 'tabernacle' is the same as is used in v. 44 of the 'tabernacle of the testimony', and is probably employed of set purpose to denote both the true and the counterfeit. The real becomes counterfeit when the heart is wrong. This translation follows the LXX of Amos v. 26, and has something to be said in its favour (see margin there). But the word used by the prophet in the original Hebrew (Siccuth) is not the usual one for 'tabernacle' (Obhal), though it closely resembles the usual word for 'booths' (Succoth), which is regularly employed of the Feast of tabernacles (booths). It is regarded, therefore, in the Revised Version as a proper name; and, instead of 'Moloch', we have the words 'your king', which are a literal translation of the original Hebrew the Hebrew for king being Melech). Thus the whole sentence

Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen. Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with ¹Joshua when ¹Gr. *Jeans*. 45

in Amos now runs 'Ye have borne Siccuth your king'. Now, in the Accad language anciently spoken in North Babylonia, we meet with the word Sakkut or Sakkus as a name of the planet Saturn, with a Babylonian equivalent Kaawanu. The general opinion of scholars now is that the Hebrew word Siccuth or Sikkuth, which occurs nowhere else, represents the Accadian Sakkut and stands for Saturn. The Hebrews, in transliterating idol names, were accustomed to alter them slightly, chiefly from a spirit of contempt for them. If this conjecture be correct, then Amos really said 'Ye have borne (not the tabernacle of the Lord but) Saturn your king'.

Stephen, of course, used his vernacular Bible, the LXX version of the Old Testament (v. 14, note), and the lesson which he pointed from that version was forcible enough. Moloch was the sun-god, who was widely worshipped by various branches of the Semitic race. Frequent references to his worship occur in the Bible (Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2; 1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. xxxii. 35).

The god Rephan] So runs the LXX rendering of Amos. In the English version, we now find 'Chiun your images'. It has already been pointed out that the Babylonian equivalent of Sakkut, the non-Semitic word for Saturn, is Kaawanu, which curiously resembles Chiun, the term employed in the original by Amos. The latter word, therefore, is probably a Hebrew transliteration of Kaawanu or Kawan, and, like Siccuth, represents the planet Saturn. The name for Saturn in Persian is still Kaiwan.

'Rephan' may, perhaps, be a linguistic alteration, deliberate or otherwise, by the Greek translators, of the word Kawan or Chiun. Some, however, think that it stands for the Egyptian Repa, a title, it is said, of the god Set (Saturn); and that it was adopted by the LXX translators, writing in Egypt, as the nearest local equivalent for the god Chiun. The matter is not clear enough to dogmatize about.

they entered on the possession of the nations, which God thrust out before the face of our fathers, unto
46 the days of David; who found favour in the sight of

The parallelism which predominates in Hebrew poetry favours this interpretation.

Ye have borne Sikkuth (Saturn) your king;
Yea, Chiun (Saturn) your images;
The star of your god
Which ye made to yourselves

We who live in India know how great a part the planet-deity Saturn (Sani) plays in the mythology and practical beliefs of the people, a sinister god to be carefully propitiated. To be born when such an evil planet is in the ascendant is a misfortune of the direst kind, in popular estimation.

Carry you away] See v. 4, note.

Beyond Babylon] Amos had said 'beyond Damascus', but Stephen purposely applies the prophecy, by a lawful historical extension, to the later captivity of Babylon.

44. The tabernacle of the testimony] See v. 43, note on word 'tabernacle'. St. Stephen here takes up the charge about speaking against the temple, and gives in brief the history of the Jewish sanctuary. It was the movable tabernacle, not the fixed temple, which God originally ordained, and that in the wilderness, not in the holy land.

45. Our fathers in their turn] Literally, 'Our fathers, having received it in their turn'. The verb is peculiar to this verse in the New Testament, and means 'to take over something from a predecessor'. Moses, so to speak, handed on the tabernacle to others, when he passed away.

Brought in with Joshua] The point emphasized is that it was the tabernacle which was the original sanctuary in the land of promise. The temple was, so to speak, an afterthought, and that mainly on the part of man.

The possession of the nations] For 'possession' see v. 5. Here, as there, the speaker lays stress upon the fact that the

God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the **47** Most High dwelleth not in *houses* made with hands; **48** as saith the prophet,

holy land was God's free gift. It was He who 'thrust out' the heathen nations and gave it to Israel for an inheritance.

Unto the days of David] These words are best coupled directly with the verb 'brought in', the words between being regarded as a parenthesis; 'Which our fathers brought in with Joshua, when they entered on the possession of the nations, (and it remained His sanctuary) unto the days of David'. Since, however, the conquest of the adjoining nations was not really completed till the days of David; we may also construe 'which God thrust out before the face of our fathers, (this thrusting out continuing) right up to the time of David'. We can trace the presence of the tabernacle in Shiloh (1 Sam. i. 3); in Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 1) and in Gibeon (2 Chron. i. 3). We lose sight of it finally when it is carried by Solomon into the newly built temple (2 Chron. v. 5).

46. Asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob] See 2 Sam. ch. vii. The words are a quotation from Ps. cxxxii. 5, after the LXX. The word 'habitation' is from the same root as the word 'tabernacle', but suggests a more permanent and dignified abode than a mere 'tent'. It occurs in the New Testament again only in 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. It seems to be implied that God was not desirous of a grander sanctuary, even when besought to allow one, and that by David who had 'found favour' in His sight.

47. But Solomon built Him a house] The 'tent' was thus displaced not merely by a 'tent-like habitation' but by a substantial and stately 'house'. For the building of Solomon's temple, see 1 Kings vi-viii chapters. This, when destroyed by the armies of Babylon, was replaced by Zerubbabel's temple (completed 516 B.C.); which, in turn, was rebuilt and beautified by Herod the Great 20 B.C. It was Herod's temple in which St. Stephen's hearers made their boast.

- 49 The heaven is my throne,
 And the earth the footstool of my feet :
 What manner of house will ye build me ? saith
 the Lord :
 Or what is the place of my rest ?
- 50 Did not my hand make all these things ?
- 51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears,

48. The Most High] It is remarkable that Stephen uses a title which was in vogue also among pagan peoples. It suggests, perhaps, that God is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews.

Dwelleth not] See ii. 5, note. God's presence cannot be confined within any building, as though He were a finite man with physical limitations and a fixed abode. We have this erroneous opinion about the localization of the deity in its crudest and most material shape in India, where, in the ceremony of 'Ávâhana', Hindu priests profess to cause, by means of incantations, their god to enter the idol and take up his abode there.

Made with hands] An adjective found again in Mark xiv. 58 ; Eph. ii. 11 ; Heb. ix. 11, 24.

As saith the prophet] The quotation is made from Isa. lxi. 1, 2, with only slight deviation from the LXX. Cf. what Solomon had himself said at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings viii. 27 ; 2 Chron. vi. 18). See also ch. xvii. 24. Stephen's contention is that the Hebrew prophets had ardently protested against the idea of confining the divine presence to any temple and had pleaded the cause of spiritual religion.

51. Stiffnecked] The word is found only here in the New Testament, but is taken from the LXX version of Exod. xxxiii. 3, 5 ; xxxiv. 9. Moses had used it of their forefathers. It means, in this connexion, 'obstinately disobedient to God', 'unwilling to bend to His will and purpose'.

Uncircumcised in heart and ears] The word 'uncircumcised', also, is found only here in the New Testament. It occurs

ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your 52 fathers persecute? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom

in the LXX of Jer. vi. 10; ix. 26; Ezek. xliv. 7. The Jews boasted of their circumcision, which indeed was the sign and seal of their covenant with God (v. 8), and despised the uncircumcised Gentiles. Stephen tells them that, in God's sight, they are themselves aliens to the covenant in will (heart) and obedient understanding (ears). Inward disposition, not an external observance of outward rites, is the really vital thing.

Do always resist the Holy Ghost] The verb is a strong one, and is found only here in the New Testament. It means, 'do always fling yourselves in opposition against the Holy Ghost'. It occurs in the LXX of Num. xxvii. 14. Cf. Isa. lxiii. 10. We have here another incidental proof of the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit.

It is evident from the sudden change in the preacher's tone that his words had cut his hearers to the quick. They were provoked by his truthful indictment of their national sins and by his fearless criticism of their most cherished opinions. He saw the storm rising and faced it with dauntless bravery.

52. Which of the prophets] See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16; Matt. v. 12; xxi. 34-6; xxiii. 35-7; Luke xiii. 84.

And they killed] 'Not only did they persecute, they also killed them.' For a specific instance, see 2 Chron. xxiv. 20-2.

Shewed before] See iii. 18, note.

The Righteous One] See iii. 14; xxii. 14; and cf. Isa. xi. 4, 5; liii. 11. The Lord Jesus was, pre-eminently, 'the Righteous One', in that He alone perfectly fulfilled God's will and law.

Betrayers] A word only used again in Luke vi. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 4. They had delivered Him up to the Romans for execution. Cf. iii. 13.

53 ^{1 Or, as the ordinance of angels Gr. unto ordinances of angels.} ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law ¹ as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not.

54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut

Murderers] See ii. 23; iii. 14; v. 30. Thus they had consummated the offences of their forefathers by committing the climax-sin of all.

53. As it was ordained by angels] Cf. Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2, in which passages the angels are regarded as intermediaries through whom the Law was given; a view based, apparently, on Deut. xxxiii. 2, where the LXX reads 'At His right hand were angels with Him', in lieu of 'At His right hand was a fiery law unto them'. Cf. also Ps. lxxviii. 17. As the present verse is rendered in the text, a similar meaning is suggested. The literal translation, however, would be 'on (or unto) ordinances (or injunctions) of angels', and may be understood to mean either 'ye received the law at (i.e. in consequence of) injunctions of angels';—or else 'ye received the law as (being) ordinances of angels'. The general idea would appear to be that additional lustre was attached to the law on account of the presence and ministry of angels at its first promulgation. Its inception was attended with all the concomitants of heavenly glory.

Kept it not] St. Stephen's speech had abundantly proved this. As their fathers had broken it by their stubborn disobedience (vv. 38-43, 52), so also they themselves had broken it alike by their unspirituality and by their murder of the Righteous One to whom it testified (vv. 37, 51, 52).

Thus Stephen turned the tables on those who had accused him of disregarding and dishonouring the law of Moses (vi. 11, 13, 14).

54. They were cut to the heart] See ch. v. 33, where the same word occurs. The words of the preacher were like a saw cutting them through and through.

Gnashed on him with their teeth] 'They kept gnashing (or grinding) their teeth at him', in rage and hatred.

to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked 55 up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of 56

55. Being full of the Holy Ghost] The verb translated 'being' suggests that the fulness spoken of was no new and sudden experience, but that he had been full and continued full of the Holy Spirit all through. Cf. vi. 3, 5, 8; xi. 24. It speaks of a pre-existing and permanent state rather than of a sudden inspiration.

Looked up stedfastly] See i. 10, for the meaning of this verb. His heavenward look was alike an act of worship (John xi. 41; xvii. 1) and an appeal for succour (Ps. cxxi. 1, 2).

Saw the glory of God] He beheld some bright vision or manifestation of the divine majesty. Cf. Luke ii. 9; Rev. xxi. 11.

Jesus standing on the right hand of God] This is the first appearance of the ascended Saviour in His glorious state. We have another recorded in xxvi. 16. Here,—He appears to succour a suffering saint; there,—to save a rebellious sinner. The 'right hand' is the position of honour and power (ii. 38, note). The ascended Christ is usually represented as 'sitting' on the right hand of God, as in the attitude of authority and intercession (Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xvi. 19; Luke xx. 42-3; Heb. i. 3; x. 12, 13). Here He is seen 'standing', as though having risen to help and receive His persecuted servant.

56. I see] See iv. 13, note, for same verb. It denotes clear and steady beholding.

The Son of man] The special title by which our Lord frequently described Himself when upon earth, as beautifully expressing His relationship to humanity. Outside the Gospels, it occurs only in this one verse (Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14 are to be differentiated). Stephen purposely used it to shew that it was Jesus of Nazareth Himself who was standing in the place of

57 man standing on the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, 58 and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses

supreme power and glory. To Jewish ears, the very expression, in such a connexion, would sound like grievous blasphemy. Cf. Matt. xxvi. 64-5. It was the signal for an uncontrollable outburst of fury. There was a sudden clamour of horror and anger. Cf. xix. 28, 34.

57. They cried out] The same expression 'cried out with a loud voice' is used of Stephen in v. 60. Mark the contrast between their loud cry of angry hatred and his loud cry of loving intercession.

Stopped their ears] So as not to hear anything more of what they regarded as awful blasphemy. In so doing, they really justified Stephen's accusation (v. 51).

Rushed upon him] The same word is used of the herd of demon-possessed swine rushing down the steep place into the sea (Matt. viii. 32; Mark v. 13), and of the mad rush of the excited mob into the theatre at Ephesus (xix. 29).

With one accord] The same word as in i. 14; how different this 'accord' from that.

58. Out of the city] In accordance with Lev. xxiv. 14. There was probably a place specially set apart for such punishments. Like his Master, Stephen suffered outside Jerusalem (John xix. 17).

Stoned him] Stoning, according to the Jewish law, was the prescribed penalty for blasphemy (Lev. xxiv. 16; 1 Kings xxi. 10). Efforts had been made to stone our Lord (John viii. 59). The tense is imperfect 'they went on (or, set about) stoning him'.

The witnesses] Two or three were indispensable according to the law (Deut. xvii. 6, 7). These were most probably the 'false

laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling 59

witnesses' of vi. 13. The requirement of witnesses was intended, in the law, as a precaution against hasty and unjust executions. The Jewish custom was to throw down the condemned person from a raised platform. Then, after the witnesses had cast their stones on his chest, the bystanders followed suit, till death ensued.

Laid down their garments] They took off and laid aside their flowing upper garments so as to be unimpeded in their actions.

A young man named Saul] See *Introd. V.* The word translated 'young man' may be employed of anyone up to forty years of age. St. Paul speaks of himself (if we accept the rendering of the text there rather than that of the margin. in *Philem. 9* as 'the aged'. That was about twenty-six years later than Stephen's death. The conditions of the case will, therefore, be satisfied if we regard him as being about thirty-five at the time of his conversion. But, apart from that verse Saul's prominent position at this time, with the great confidence reposed in him by the Jewish authorities, would shew him to be a man of not less than thirty to thirty-five years of age. The fact that the witnesses laid down their upper garments at his feet suggests that he was, so to speak, the ringleader in Stephen's martyrdom, possibly the superintendent of the proceedings (see *xxii. 20*, note).

59. And they stoned] The verb is repeated from v. 58, in the imperfect tense again. 'They continued stoning' him till he died.

Calling upon] See note on same verb in *ii. 21*. They stoned Stephen while he was invoking his Master's grace and help. The object of the verb is not expressed, but is easily supplied from the context. Cf. *1 Cor. i. 2*.

Lord Jesus] A clear instance of prayer addressed to the second person of the Trinity. Cf. *Rev. xxii. 20*. The martyr's appeal was naturally made to the heavenly Master whom he beheld in the attitude of giving him ready help.

upon *the Lord*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my
60 spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud

Receive my spirit] That is, when it leaves the body. The prayer reminds us of our Saviour's own words upon the cross (Luke xxiii. 46). Death, to the true Christian, is the passage of the disembodied spirit into the Saviour's immediate presence and safe keeping (2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23). This contrasts forcibly with the Hindu doctrine of transmigration.

60. He kneeled down] It is not certain whether the act of kneeling took place when the stoning began, as some think; or in the midst of it, as the order of the narrative naturally suggests. If the latter, it adds force and solemnity to Stephen's prayer of intercession. The martyr's last act was to kneel down reverently and plead for his murderers. For other instances of kneeling in prayer, see ix. 40; xx. 36; xxi. 5, where the same expression occurs.

Cried with a loud voice] See remarks on v. 57.

Lay not this sin to their charge] The words of the original will bear a two-fold interpretation. (a) 'Fix not this sin upon them', i.e. 'do not cause it to stand against them'; (b) 'Weigh not this sin to them', i.e. 'do not put it into the scales so as to weigh against them'. The rendering of the text practically combines both meanings. There is a striking resemblance between Stephen's prayer for his murderers and that of his Lord (Luke xxiii. 34). Like Him, this proto-martyr was falsely accused of blasphemy, unjustly condemned, and cruelly murdered. Like Him, also, he prayed for his enemies and quietly commended his spirit to the divine keeping. The happy suggestion has been made that the conversion of Saul was probably an answer to this prayer.

He fell asleep] A word aptly expressing the peaceful passing of his soul to be with Christ. Contrast the verb used of the death of Ananias and Sapphira (ch. v. 5, 10).

For the use of this verb to denote the 'passing' of true believers, see Matt. xxvii. 52; John xi. 11; Acts xiii. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 18, 20, 51; 1 Thes. iv. 13-15; 2 Pet. iii. 4. From

voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

this Greek verb our word 'cemetery' is taken. The Jews, doubtless, exceeded their legal powers in the execution of Stephen. We know from John xviii. 31 that the Sanhedrin had no authority, at this period, to put anyone to death. When men's passions are aroused, however, they are sometimes goaded into doing what is both illegal and imprudent. Pontius Pilate was probably still procurator of Judæa (he continued in office till about A. D. 36) and his relationships with the Jews had become such that we can quite believe that he was willing to overlook a breach of Roman law under such abnormal circumstances.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER VII

1. *Principal divisions.*

(1) St. Stephen's message. vv. 1-53.

(2) St. Stephen's martyrdom. vv. 54-60.

2. *Prominent topics.*

(1) A typical homily. Plain lessons from past history.

(i) Abraham, the forerunner. vv. 2-8. Remember your origin.

(ii) Joseph, the preserver. vv. 9-16. Remember your envy.

(iii) Moses, the deliverer. vv. 17-44. Remember your rebellion.

(iv) David and Solomon, the temple-builders. vv. 46-50. Remember your misconceptions.

(v) The prophets, your teachers. vv. 52. Remember your resistance.

(2) A typical martyrdom. The proto-martyr was—

(i) Full of the Holy Ghost. v. 55.

(ii) Stedfast in looking upward. v. 55.

(iii) Clear in his vision of Jesus. v. 55.

(iv) Bold in his witness for Christ. v. 56.

(v) Firm in his faith and hope. v. 59.

(vi) Earnest in his prayer for his enemies. v. 60.

(vii) Calm in his sleep of death. v. 60.

1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And there

Thoughts on Part I (Chapters 1-vii).

1. Notice Satan's five great devices and God's overruling grace.
 Satan's device. God's providence.

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| (1) Opposition. | iv. 1-22. | iv. 31-3. |
| (2) Deception. | v. 1-10. | v. 11-16. |
| (3) Persecution. | v. 17-40. | v. 41, 42; vi. 1. |
| (4) Division. | vi. 1-6. | vi. 7. |
| (5) Martyrdom. | vii. 54-60. | viii. 4-40. |

We see that Satan's attacks were made *alternately* from *without* and from *within* the Church; but that, in every case, God thwarted his purpose and overruled his malice for the furtherance and progress of the Gospel.

2. Notice the steady progress of the work and the increase of the Church.

This will appear from a perusal of the following passages: i. 15; ii. 41, 47; iv. 4; iv. 32; v. 14; vi. 1, 7. Though this part of the history ends with apparent disaster, its close is really the prelude to fresh advance and new triumphs.

3. Notice the difference between the beginning and end of this part of the history.

- (1) It begins with the revelation of *the risen Christ*, and closes with the revelation of *the ascended Christ*.
- (2) It begins with *a gathering together* for Pentecost and closes with *a dispersion* for the evangelization of the world.
- (3) It begins with *a looking stedfastly into heaven* after a *departing Lord* (i. 10), and closes with *a looking stedfastly into heaven* to a *present and enabling Lord*.

Part 2. 'Acts' in Judaea and Samaria.— Chapters 8-12

The history here enters on a new stage. Hitherto, the work has been concentrated in, and practically confined to, Jerusalem. Persecution now leads to dispersion, which promotes the spread of the Gospel and the gradual fulfilment of God's missionary

arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and

purpose. The mantle of Stephen falls on Philip and, finally, on Saul of Tarsus. The spontaneity of the work of evangelization is specially remarkable.

CHAPTER VIII

1-4. PERSECUTION. THE WITNESSES SCATTERED

1. Saul was consenting] Cf. xxii. 20. The verb is Paulolukan (Luke xi. 48; Rom. i. 32; 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13), and denotes a full consent of the will. His hearty approval carried with it grave moral responsibility, and the same principle applies to us also in India, as regards our attitude towards Christ and His cause.

Death] Literally 'destruction', a noun peculiar to this verse in the New Testament. It was frequently used by physicians.

On that day] That is, the day of Stephen's martyrdom. His death was the signal for a general persecution of the Christians. 'Wind increases flame' (Bengel).

The church] See ch. v. 11, note. The 'congregation which was at Jerusalem' now entered perforce, in a certain sense, on its world-wide mission and began to expand into the Universal Church.]

Were all scattered abroad] The verb is used again only in v. 4; xi. 19. The cognate noun (Diaspora) is the one employed to denote the Jewish 'dispersion' among the Gentiles for colonizing and trading purposes (John vii. 35; Jas. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1). Here then is a new 'dispersion', with a missionary object and value. The Greek word is derived from the act of 'sowing seed', and this dispersion proved to be, indeed, a 'scattering of the seed' of the Gospel far and wide. Wherever we Christians of India go, we should be scatterers of God's seed.

Throughout the regions, etc.] Cf. i. 8. Thus the Lord's pre-indicated plan began to be literally fulfilled. New churches were the result (ix. 31; Gal. i. 22).

2 Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men buried
 3 Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul
 laid waste the church, entering into every house, and
 haling men and women committed them to prison.

Except the apostles] Possibly, as native Jews, they were less exposed to the popular fury than the Hellenistic Christians (vi. 1). They may also have felt bound, as leaders of the community, to remain for the present at the post of danger. We should notice that we have, here, authority for preaching by the general laity (cf. v. 4).

2. Devout men] See ii. 5, note. They would seem to have been pious Jews who, though they had not embraced the new Faith, had yet a genuine respect for the character of Stephen and sincerely regretted his death.

Lamentation] A noun peculiar to this verse and denoting wailing with beating on the breast. Cf. Luke xxiii. 48. We are familiar with such outward demonstrations of grief, under similar circumstances, in India.

3. Laid waste] His conduct is strongly contrasted with that of the pious Jews who buried Stephen. His piety took the form of persecuting zeal. The verb is sometimes used of wild beasts ravaging and devastating (see Ps. lxxx. 13. LXX). The tense is imperfect and denotes a continued course of such violent action.

Haling] That is, 'dragging', 'forcing away'. The same Greek verb is found again in John xxi. 8; Acts xiv. 19; xvii. 6; Rev. xii. 4.

And women] A notice characteristic of St. Luke. Their sex might have claimed them exemption from such violent treatment.

Committed them to prison] And that continually (imperfect tense). Cf. xxii. 4; xxvi. 10. The persecutor was to learn himself, in later years, what it meant to be forcibly dragged about by others and thrown into prison again and again.

4. Scattered abroad] See v. 1, note.

They therefore that were scattered abroad went about 4 preaching the word. And Philip went down to the 5 city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ.

Went about] Literally, 'went through (districts and countries)', a verb frequently used in the Acts to describe itinerating missionary work (v. 40; ix. 32, 38; x. 38; xi. 19; xiii. 6, 14; xiv. 24; xv. 3; xvi. 6; xviii. 23; xix. 1, 21; xx. 2, 25).

Preaching the word] The Greek verb is the one which has been adopted into English as 'evangelize' (See ch. v. 42, note). The phrase means 'preaching the good tidings of the word'. By 'the word' is intended, practically, 'the message of the Gospel'.

Thus we see a company of Christians, scattered abroad by circumstances, proclaiming everywhere, as they passed from place to place, the glad news of Christ's Gospel. The pattern for ourselves is clear and plain. We are to be His witnesses in this land, from the Himálayas to Cape Cormorin, as duty or circumstances lead us from place to place, without waiting for any special organization or seeking any other incentive than that which comes from a true and burning love for Christ our Saviour.

5-26. PHILIP IN SAMARIA. SIMON MAGUS

5. Philip] One of the Seven (vi. 5), next to Stephen in the list and, like him, full of evangelistic zeal. He has the distinction of being the only one to whom the title of 'evangelist' is definitely given in the Acts of the Apostles (xxi. 8).

Samaria] The quondam capital of the northern (Israelite) kingdom, and an important centre commanding the roads northward to Esdraelon and westward to the coast. It was first built by Omri (1 Kings xvi. 24). After its capture by Sargon, the Assyrian monarch (722 B.C.), its Israelite inhabitants, in common with those of the whole northern kingdom, were largely replaced by foreign colonists. It passed through various vicissitudes under the Greeks and Romans, being finally rebuilt by Pompey. Herod the Great embellished and fortified it, renaming it Sebaste in honour of the Emperor, (Sebastos being the Greek equivalent of the Latin Augustus). Its inhabitants at this period represented a mixture of various races.

6 And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they

Proclaimed] The word means 'to proclaim like a herald'. This is the first occurrence of it in the Acts, but we shall meet it again in ix. 20; x. 37, 42; xv. 21; xix. 13; xx. 25; xxviii. 31. While the verb used in v. 4 (preach) lays stress on the *announcement of glad tidings*, this one emphasizes the *proclamation of an important message*.

The Christ] The Samaritans were not a heathen people, though, from their mixed descent, they had proclivities which were Gentile rather than Jewish. There was at least some admixture of Hebrew blood in their veins, and they had adopted a modified Jewish sacrificial ritual. They gloried in their famous temple, built on Mt. Gerizim (John iv. 20), probably in the time of Sanballat, Nehemiah's chief opponent. Their sacred book was the Samaritan Pentateuch, which presents many variations from the Jewish Pentateuch. They held a strong Messianic hope (cf. John iv. 25-6), and Philip, with true wisdom, made that his avenue of approach to them in his presentation of the Gospel message, as indeed our Lord had done before him. He 'proclaimed unto them the Messiah', for whom they were looking as a nation.

We have here, therefore, an illustration of the principle of Christian adaptation in our methods of work and preaching (Introd. VI. 4). We do well to tell the Muhammadan that our Lord Jesus is the true and sinless Saviour-Prophet; and the Hindu that we have in Him the incarnation of grace and the expiation of sin.

6. **Gave heed]** See vv. 10-11; xvi. 14, where the same verb occurs. They 'continued giving earnest heed' to his message.

With one accord] See i. 14, note.

Signs] See ii. 22, note. These special miracles are, apparently, emphasized in this passage as against the counterfeit wonders which had been previously wrought by Simon Magus (see vv. 10-11).

heard, and saw the signs which he did. ¹ For from ⁷ many of those which had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city.

¹ Or, For many of those which had unclean spirits that cried with a loud voice came forth.

But there was a certain man, Simon by name, ⁹

7. From many, etc.] See ch. v. 16. Here, as there, St. Luke differentiates between ordinary diseases, such as a physician can scientifically diagnose, and extraordinary possession by unclean spirits.

That were palsied] The form of the Greek word here employed (*παρὰλελυμένος*) is a technical medical one. St. Luke uses it again in Luke v. 18, 24; Acts ix. 33. Otherwise, it only occurs again as a quotation from the LXX in Heb. xii. 12.

8. Much joy] It is characteristic of St. Luke to call attention to joy (Introd. VI. 9). Cf. also v. 39. Christianity is a religion of joy, for it gives us the assurance of the pardon of past sins, power for present holiness, and a glad and certain hope of future glory.

9. Simon] The narrative which follows is of special interest, as shewing us the first conflict between the Gospel and those pseudo-spiritual systems which abounded all through the East at that period, and which still survive in lands like India. See xiii. 6, note, and Introd. VI. 6. This Simon, commonly called Simon Magus, was, according to Justin Martyr, a native of Gitta, a village of Samaria.

Which before time in the city used sorcery] Literally 'A certain man, Simon by name, was before time in that city (i.e. he was there before Philip came) using sorcery'. The verb rendered 'to use sorcery' corresponds with the word *Magian*, and meant originally 'to be skilled in Magian lore',—the lore, that is, of the Medo-Persian priests, which consisted of an admixture of science and superstition. It then came to mean

which beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the 'people' of Samaria, giving out that
 10 ^{1 Gr. nation.} himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great.

'to practise magical arts of any kind'. It is from this that Simon is known as Simon Magus. Men of this description often possessed a smattering of science, with which they united astrology, incantations, sorcery, etc. They have their representatives in the astrologers, soothsayers, mantra-sástris, and demon priests of India, with their horoscopes, mantras, yantras, tantras, charms, spells, and divinations.

Amazed] See ii. 7, where the same verb occurs. It expresses the fact that they were quite 'distranght', under the spell of the Magian's strong influence.

That himself was some great one] He may have taken advantage of the Messianic expectations of the Samaritans to concentrate attention on himself as the supposed prophet and deliverer of their race.

10. All gave heed] See v. 6, note. *Here* we see them giving heed to an impostor; *there* to the message of the truth.

That power of God which is called Great] Simon seems to have taught, along with his practice of the arts of magic, a sort of pseudo-philosophy of which we find other traces at that period and which was afterwards elaborated in the system of Gnosticism. It represented man as united to God by a series of mediators in the shape of divine emanations called Aeons or Powers. The Samaritans saw in Simon the chief of these Powers, a sort of mighty effluence from the deity rendered human by incarnation. We have a faint adumbration of this in the Vaisnavite sect of Hinduism, according to which the deity infused certain portions of his essence, in varying degrees, in the different avadárs or (so-called) incarnations.

And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he 11 had amazed them with his sorceries. But when they 12 believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself 13

11. Gave heed] See vv. 6, 10. The repetition of the word shews how fully Simon had managed to concentrate their attention on himself by reason of his spurious works of magic. His sway over their minds was of long duration, and continued undiminished till it was challenged and broken by the Gospel.

Had amazed them] See v. 9, note.

Sorceries] The noun corresponds with the verb of v. 9. It represents our own word magic. Simon's sorceries probably took the form of divination, enchantment, and exorcism.

12. Preaching good tidings] See v. 4, where the same verb is used.

Concerning the kingdom of God] Cf. i. 3. That is, the spiritual economy which has God for its author and ruler. It differs greatly from the earthly kingdom which the Samaritans expected with the advent of the Messiah.

And the name of Jesus Christ] That is, the facts about His incarnation, ministry, and redemption. Philip taught them clearly who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for the salvation of sinful men.

Were baptized] The tense is imperfect and speaks of a succession of converts coming from time to time to receive the rite of baptism.

Both men and women] Cf. v. 3. St. Luke never fails to draw attention to the women. We know how important a part a woman played at Sychar, which was only seven miles from Samaria, during our Lord's ministry there (John iv. 4-42).

13. Simon also himself believed] That is, he placed credence in what Philip taught, and accepted, intellectually at least, the

believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great ¹miracles wrought, he was amazed.

¹ Gr. *powers*.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem

message of the Gospel. The narrative which follows shews, however, that his was not a living faith resulting in a real change of heart. Every mission field can furnish examples of those who, while fully convinced of the truth of Christianity and exercising an intellectual belief in our Saviour, have, nevertheless, not really broken away from the love of sin or given their hearts to Christ.

Being baptized] Doubtless, his baptism followed on some public confession of faith. As Cyril has well said, 'he was *baptized*, but he was not *illuminated*.' In this, alas, he is only the type of a considerable class.

Continued with Philip] The verb is the same as in i. 14; ii 42, 46; vi. 4. It implies steadfast perseverance. Simon constituted himself, so to speak, a disciple of Philip and continued persistently in his company. ;

Beholding] See iv. 13; vii. 56, notes. The ex-sorcercer would be likely to pay close attention to these new and genuine spiritual phenomena.

Signs and great miracles] See ii. 22, note. The words for 'great' and 'miracle' are the very same as those which occurred in v. 10 (great and power). The man who had allowed himself to be called, in a wholly different sense, the 'great power' of God, now saw 'great powers' in genuine and miraculous manifestation.

He was amazed] See v. 9, where the same verb occurs. He who had 'amazed' others by spurious phenomena is now, in his turn, 'amazed' by true and bona fide miracles. So the light dispels the darkness; the true confounds the false.

14. **The apostles]** Philip had struck out new paths for the Gospel in the spontaneity of Christian love and zeal. His work is now to receive the sanction and confirmation of the

heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were 15 come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none 16 of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, 17

Apostolic Body. The evangelization of the semi-Gentile and schismatical Samaritans had been viewed with interest at Jerusalem. If it created anxiety at first, the anxiety quickly vanished in the light of God's evident approval.

Peter and John] See iii. 1. This is the last special mention of St. John in the Acts. It is interesting to notice that the man who once desired to call down the fire of judgement on the Samaritans (Luke ix. 54) is now one of those sent to carry to them the fire of the Holy Ghost.

15. Prayed for them] Prayer precedes the laying on of hand also in vi. 6; xiii. 3. The prayer was no mere form or formula but a definite seeking of divine grace and unction.

Might receive the Holy Ghost] The pentecostal gift (i. 5-8; ii. 4-38).

16. He was fallen upon none of them] The same verb is used in the same connexion in x. 44; xi. 15. See also i. 8, note. It speaks of His coming from on high, in a supernatural manner. This verse shews that it is possible for Christians, like those Samaritans, to be baptized and consistent believers, and yet to lack the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Into the name of the Lord Jesus] See ii. 38, note. Notice the expression 'the Lord Jesus', implying that He is now Master as well as Saviour.

17. Then laid they their hands on them] See vi. 6, note. The incidents related in ix. 17; xix. 6 should be compared. The Holy Ghost fell directly, without any imposition of hands, on the disciples assembled in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (ii. 4) and on the company gathered in Cornelius's

- 18 and they received the Holy Ghost. Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the ¹ Holy Ghost was given, he offered them
- 19 ^{1 Some ancient authorities omit Holy.} money, saying, Give me also this power that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto
- 20 him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast

house (x. 44). Those were extraordinary and abnormal instances, but teach us that God is sovereign in His ways of working and that His grace cannot be confined to any modes or methods. Normally, however, as we learn from the other instances in the Acts, the Holy Ghost was conferred with the laying on of hands, and this shews us the value of order and the advantage of symbolic actions when rightly used. It is usual to find in these passages the origin of what afterwards developed into the rite of Confirmation.

18. When Simon saw] It now became clear that, in spite of his mental assent to the Gospel and his baptism, he was not a real Christian.

Offered them money] His thinking that spiritual gifts can be bought and sold shews how very far he was from a real apprehension of the meaning of the Gospel. He evidently regarded the power of bestowing the Holy Ghost as a sort of 'occult secret' to be imparted at will to others. From this incident, the buying and selling of spiritual offices has acquired the distinctive name of 'simony'.

19. Give me also this power] He desired for himself not the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost *within*, but merely the power of producing miraculous phenomena *without*. In other words, he would fain be a magician still, but one wielding greater power than before, and that under a Christian name. His love of money and authority was absolutely unchanged. He was not, in any sense, 'a new creature'.

20. Thy silver perish with thee] The dangers arising from the love of money are strongly emphasized in the Acts (i. 18;

thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou 21
 hast neither part nor lot in this ¹matter:
 for thy heart is not right before God. ^{1 Gr. word.}
 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the 22

v. 1-11; vi. 1; xiii. 6-11; xvi. 19; xix. 25-7). The apostles shew themselves fully alive to the evil of it and absolutely free from it (iii. 6; xx. 33-4). We need to watch carefully against the first suspicions of it, for it is fatal to all spirituality (1 Tim. vi. 10).

The gift] See ii. 38, note.

21. Neither part nor lot] A phrase occurring in the LXX of Deut. xii. 12; xiv. 27-29. It is equivalent to saying 'no share whatever'.

In this matter] As so translated, it will naturally indicate the 'matter' in question, namely, the authority to impart the gift of the Holy Ghost. As the margin shews, however, it reads literally 'in this word', which may refer to the teaching of the Gospel, the message of salvation (see vv. 4, 12).

Not right] Literally 'not straight'. Elsewhere in the New Testament the adjective is used of 'straight paths' (Matt. iii. 3; Mark i. 3; Luke iii. 4-5; Acts xiii. 10; 2 Pet. ii. 15). Simon's heart was distorted and perverted by greed of gain and love of power.

22. Repent] See ii. 38, note.

Wickedness] The word thus rendered denotes specially 'an evil habit of mind', 'a depraved disposition'. The force of the Greek is 'Repent (so as to turn entirely away) from this thy malice'.

The thought of thy heart] We cannot fail to notice the stress laid all through on the state of the heart. That is the all-important thing (Matt. xv. 7, 8, 18, 19). Notwithstanding his interest in the Gospel and his conformity to its external rites, the heart of Simon had been wrong all the time. The word rendered 'thought' is peculiar to this verse and indicates a

- Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.
- 23 ¹ Or, *will become gall* (or, *a gall root*) of bitterness and a bond of iniquity
- 24 And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.

matured plan or project. It suggests that Simon had not brought his money on a sudden impulse, but after much and careful thinking.

23. I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness, etc.] The words are capable of two different renderings.

(a) If we follow that of the text, the meaning is that Simon was himself immersed in the bitter gall of sin and held fast by the bond of iniquity.

(b) If, however, we adopt the rendering of the margin which is, perhaps, preferable as bringing out better the force of the original, the verse means that Simon would prove to be, to others, the very gall of bitterness and a bond of iniquity holding them back from God's salvation.

The expression 'gall of bitterness' is taken from Deut. xxix. 18 (LXX), where the idolatrous Israelite is represented as 'a root that beareth gall and wormwood'. This reference favours, obviously, the latter of the two interpretations indicated above. The phrase 'bond of iniquity' is from the LXX of Isa. lviii. 6.

24. Pray ye for me] The pronoun 'ye' is emphatic. Simon dreaded punishment; he shewed no hatred of sin. And he had a superstitious belief in the influence of men whom he regarded as possessed of special occult powers.

Here we lose sight of Simon Magus in New Testament history. In later writings, however, he is regarded as the typical arch-heretic. Justin Martyr tells us that he went to Rome in the reign of the emperor Claudius, wrought miracles by the power of demons, and was honoured as a god. He is also said to have strenuously opposed the apostle Peter in the imperial city. Most of the traditions about him, however, are unreliable, and all that seems really certain is that he continued

They therefore, when they had testified and spoken 25 the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

But an angel of the Lord spake unto Phillip, saying, 26

impenitent and was regarded from the second century onward as the proto-heresiarch. His history is a standing warning against making a merely formal profession of Christianity while the heart and motives remain unchanged. The Bezan text reads, 'I beseech you pray for me to God that none of the evils which ye have spoken of may come upon me. And he ceased not weeping greatly'.

25. Testified] See ii. 40, note. They seem to have remained some time at Samaria, bearing witness to the Gospel and instructing the converts more fully.

Returned] The imperfect tense of the verb suggests a journey with various halts for preaching.

Preached the Gospel] The verb already noticed in vv. 4, 12.

Many villages of the Samaritans] Not only did they confirm Philip's new departure, but they themselves also broke up fresh ground in the same region. Though we part company here with the evangelistic campaign in the country of Samaria, we have evidence in xv. 3 that its results were permanent.

26-40. PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH

26. But] The evangelist is now called away from the multitudes of a great city to shew the way of salvation to an individual seeker after truth by the wayside. So God fulfils His missionary purposes in many ways.

An angel of the Lord] See ch. v. 19, note. In v. 29, it is the Holy Spirit Himself who directs His servant.

Arise and go] Compare the similar marching orders given to Ananias (ix. 11) and Peter (x. 20). In each case, obedience to the command led to important spiritual and evangelistic results.

Toward the south] The same phrase occurs again in xxii. 6, where it is rendered 'about noon' (cf. marginal rendering here).

Arise, and go ¹toward the south unto the way that
 goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the
 same is desert. And he arose and went;

27

¹Or, *at noon.*

Gaza was south-south-west of Samaria, and so the rendering of the text is reasonable, since Philip would travel due south till he reached the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

The marginal reading, however, (which also conforms to the LXX usage of the word) is quite permissible and suggests that God's evangelists are to be ready for service whenever occasion requires, even at the hottest hour of the day, and are to seize a passing opportunity before it is too late. In eastern lands 'noon' is, with many, the season for a siesta.

The way that goeth down] There were several roads from Jerusalem to Gaza. One led via Ashkelon and then along the coast. Another passed through Hebron, across the less frequented country known as the Negeb. If the word desert refer to the road, then we must understand that the latter route is intended and see in the angel's directions a specific instruction to Philip concerning the path to take in order to fulfil the object of his mission.

Gaza] The most southern of the five great cities of the Philistines which played so important a part in Old Testament history. It was two miles from the sea. The main road to Egypt passed through it, so that it was an important centre of traffic. It appears to have been destroyed about 96 B.C. by the Maccabean prince Alexander Jannaeus, a new city being built in the Roman period on the sea-coast and distinguished from its predecessor by the name of 'maritime Gaza'.

The same is desert] If this remark refer to Gaza, we must understand it as indicating the old city which lay in ruins. Since the high way to Egypt passed through the old city, the comment of the text is pertinent. Others, however, consider that the road from Jerusalem to Gaza is intended, and not the city. In that case, we must understand that Philip was instructed to take the less frequented route via Hebron mentioned above,

and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem for to worship; and he was returning and sitting 28 in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

27. Ethiopia] The name of a vast country which is now known to have included not only Abyssinia and Nubia but also the Soudan and the countries bordering on the west coast of the Red Sea.

A eunuch] Probably to be taken in its literal sense (Matt. xix. 12), and not as merely synonymous with 'court official.' If so, it is an illustration of the more liberal doctrine of Isa. lvi. 3-5, as against the strict exclusiveness of the Jewish law. It is like St. Luke to accentuate the comprehensiveness of the Gospel and to relate the story of the conversion of one who, to strict Jewish eyes, might have appeared disqualified alike by his alien nationality and his physical defects. The door of God's kingdom is open to every man who is willing to enter in.

Of great authority] One word in the Greek, 'a potentate', 'a ruler' (Luke i. 52; 1 Tim. vi. 15). It means here 'a high official'.

Candace, queen of the Ethiopians] Both Strabo and Pliny mention Candace as the name of a queen governing Meroë, a kingdom of Ethiopia. It was the name of a dynasty of queens, just as Pharaoh and Ptolemy were the titles of different lines of Egyptian kings.

Over all her treasure] It is remarkable that the Greek word for 'treasure' is 'gaza' received into Greek from Persian, as it would seem. The word still in vogue in India, 'khazāna', is allied to it. On the way to the city of Gaza, this lord of Candace's treasure (gaza) found the treasure of eternal life (Matt. xiii. 44).

To worship] He was already a proselyte to Judaism and one in search of fuller light (cf. John xii. 20-1; Acts ii. 10).

28. Was reading] He was reading aloud (v. 30), in a manner familiar to us in the East, the Greek version of the Old

29 And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join
 30 thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and
 heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Under-
 31 standest thou what thou readest? And he said, How
 can I, except some one shall guide me? And he
 32 besought Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the
 place of the scripture which he was reading was this,

Testament Scriptures (as the quotation in vv. 32, 33 shews). That version was widely diffused in Egypt. This seeker after truth was taking the right course in studying the Bible.

29. The Spirit said] Mark the personality of the Holy Ghost (ch. v. 3, 9, notes). /

Join thyself to] See ch. v. 13, note.

30. Ran to] We notice the alacrity of the evangelist's obedience and the eagerness with which he seized a passing opportunity.

Understandest thou] As St. Augustine truly said: 'The New Testament lies hid in the Old'; but the light of the Holy Spirit is needed to enable us to see and apprehend it (1 Cor. ii. 9-11).

31. Except some one shall guide me] This very verb is used of the special work of the Holy Spirit, whose peculiar province it is to guide us into all the truth (John xvi. 13). In doing so, He usually makes use of human instruments. We are struck by the humility and docile spirit of this African dignitary. God is always ready to lead the meek-hearted (Ps. xxv. 9).

32. The place of the scripture] Some consider that the word rendered 'place' represents the Hebrew 'parashah' or sectional division. The law and the prophets were divided into such sections for purposes of public reading. But we need only suppose that the word denotes, in modern language, 'the passage of the Scripture', that is, the immediate context in which the quotation occurs. The quotation is from Isa. liii.

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
 And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
 So he openeth not his mouth:

In his humiliation his judgement was taken away: 33

7, 8, almost verbatim according to the LXX. Without knowing it, perhaps, the eunuch had lighted upon that chapter of the Old Testament (Isa. liii) which, more fully than any other, deals with the vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was standing, so to speak, on the very verge of Calvary. That chapter has brought light and peace to many souls in every age.

As a sheep . . . as a lamb] The order of these words in the LXX differs from that in the Hebrew which is more precise. 'All the utterances of the New Testament regarding the Lamb of God are derived from this prophecy' (Delitzsch).

33. In His humiliation His judgement was taken away] This may be interpreted in a twofold sense.

- (a) 'In His state of humiliation, the righteous judgement which was His due was taken away'; i.e. He was unjustly treated.
- (b) 'When He humbled Himself (Phil. ii. 8), His condemnation was taken away and cancelled'; i.e. He was exalted because of His self-humiliation.

The Hebrew original emphasizes the severity of the suffering by, or from, which He was taken away.

His generation who shall declare?] The most natural interpretation of this is, 'Who shall declare and number the generation or seed which He has won by His death and passion?' (cf. Ps. xxii. 30). They have, however, been explained as meaning 'Who shall declare the wickedness of the generation in which He lived and by which He was put to death?' The Hebrew original seems to lay stress on the carelessness and thoughtlessness of His contemporaries who failed to lay to heart the meaning of His passion.

His life is taken from the earth] This means, most naturally 'He was put to death', and the Hebrew original agrees. Some,

His generation who shall declare?

For his life is taken from the earth.

- 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said,
I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet
35 this? of himself, or of some other? And Philip
opened his mouth, and beginning from this
36 scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And
as they went on the way, they came unto a
certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold,
here is water; what doth hinder me to be
38 *baptized?*¹ And he commanded the chariot

however, interpret 'His life is taken from the earth to a higher and heavenly sphere' (Phil. ii. 9-11), referring the words to His exaltation.

34. Of whom speaketh the etc.] The eunuch had not the key which unlocks the meaning of the prophetic Scriptures. He was reading of God's suffering Servant, but knew nothing of the historic person to whom all such prophecies converged. Jesus Christ is the key to man's enigmas.

35. Beginning from this scripture] Philip based his teaching on the passage which was present to the eunuch's mind. There was no need to seek a different starting-point, for Isa. liii is full throughout of the Saviour's atoning work.

Preached unto him Jesus] In other words, 'told him the glad tidings (same verb as in vv. 4, 12, 25) of the Saviour, Jesus'. Doubtless, the doctrine of the atonement was his principal theme, in expounding such a chapter. And it is the central doctrine of the Gospel. From what follows, we see that he must also have taught him that faith in Christ is to be openly confessed in baptism.

36. What doth hinder me?] The immediateness of the eunuch's faith and obedience is noteworthy. His was one of those cases of sincere inquirers who accept the Gospel without delay and act without hesitation on their new convictions. He

to stand still : and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he baptized him. And 39 when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip ; and the eunuch saw him

contrasts strongly with those in India to-day who shrink from confessing Christ because of the social difficulties and persecution which may arise. This man took the right step at once, in the glad confidence of simple faith.

37. And Philip] This verse is wanting in the oldest MSS. and so has been consigned to the margin. The omission of it leaves the eunuch's question unanswered. It is contained in the Bezan or western text, and was read as genuine by Irenaeus. If we could claim it certainly as part of the text, the condition laid down by Philip, 'if thou believest with all thine heart', would be significant as coming after the story of Simon Magus who received baptism though his heart was not right before God. It would also furnish us with a scriptural model for the confession of faith before baptism. As it is, however, the weight of documentary evidence obliges us to leave it in the margin, as, possibly, a somewhat later addition, though thoroughly scriptural in character.

38. They both went down] Here, at least, is a clear instance of baptism by immersion (ii. 41, note). Cf. Matt. iii. 16. This is the mode decidedly preferred by the rubrics of the Prayer Book.

He baptized him] Alien by race and eunuch as he was. Philip was a true successor of Stephen in claiming for the Gospel a wider field of operations than the limits of the Jewish race. The eunuch was, most probably, a proselyte, and, as such, passed into the Christian Church through the door of Judaism ; but he was none the less an Ethiopian.

39. Caught away Phillip] The verb is a strong one, 'snatched away', and is found, e.g., in Matt. xiii. 19 ; John x. 28-9 ; Acts xxiii. 10 ; 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. The evangelist's work was done, so far as the eunuch was concerned. Having introduced the man to the Saviour, Philip was no longer required. Human

40 no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached

teachers have their place, and that an important one, but are to beware of attracting faith to themselves rather than to their Lord. We know nothing of the mode in which Philip was caught away, nor is it necessary that we should.

Saw him no more] In this, the eunuch contrasts significantly with Simon Magus who 'continued with Philip' after his baptism (v. 13).

For he went on his way rejoicing] This is assigned as the reason why he saw Philip no more. He was so full of his new-found joy in Christ that he had no eyes for other things. The verb is in the imperfect tense, 'he kept going on his way rejoicing.' For 'rejoicing', see v. 8, note, and Introduction VI. 9. This joy of salvation is unbroken even by separation from beloved teachers or by fierce persecution (ch. v. 41; xiii. 52). We know nothing more for certain of the eunuch, though we may be sure that he carried the Gospel with him to his native land. Tradition represents him as the evangelist of Ethiopia, and the Abyssinians regard him, though without sufficient reason, as the founder of their church. We trace in his conversion at least a partial fulfilment of such prophecies as Ps. lxxviii. 31; Isa. lvi. 4-8; Zeph. iii. 10.

40. Philip was found] That is, he was next seen busy at work again in Azotus.

Azotus] The ancient Ashdod, one of the five great Philistine cities, about twenty miles north of Gaza and half-way to Joppa.

Passing through] See v. 4, note (went about).

Preached the Gospel] Imperfect tense, 'he went on preaching the Gospel'. One word in the Greek, the verb of vv. 4, 12, 25, 35.

All the cities] Including, probably, Ekron, Jamnia, Lydda, Joppa, and Antipatris.

Caesarea] A city on the sea-coast, about thirty miles north of Joppa. It was originally an obscure town called Stratos

the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

Tower; but Herod the Great, to whom Augustus had given it, rebuilt it on a large scale and constructed a fine harbour with immense breakwaters. He renamed it *Caesarea Augusta* in honour of the emperor, and built himself a magnificent palace there. The population consisted partly of Gentiles and partly of Jews, between whom frequent feuds occurred. When Judæa passed directly under Roman rule, *Caesarea* became the residence of their procurator, and so alike the capital city and a garrison town. Since we find Philip residing there still in A.D. 57 (see xxi. 8), it seems almost certain that he made it his head-quarters from this time forward.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER VIII

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) The scattered seed. vv. 1-4.
- (2) The Samaritan harvest. vv. 5-25.
- (3) The sincere seeker. vv. 26-40.

2. *Prominent topics.*

(1) *A typical evangelist.* Philip.

- (a) Unfettered zeal. vv. 5-27. (Goes to schismatics and strangers).
- (b) Unceasing diligence. vv. 5-27; 30-40. (Always at work. 'Runs' to utilize a passing opportunity).
- (c) Unfailing obedience. vv. 26, 27, 39. (Moves as the Spirit bids him, even though the call be 'at noon', v. 26).
- (d) Unfaltering testimony. vv. 5, 12, 35. (Points to the Saviour all the time,—not to himself, like Simon).
- (e) Untrammelled service. Equally ready for

{	A special mission in a great city. vv. 5-25.
	A definite seeking of individual souls. vv. 26-38.
	A broadcast sowing of the seed in itineration. v. 40.
	A settled work in a fixed centre, <i>Caesarea</i> . v. 40 (xxi. 8)

 (Not bound by conventional methods or conservative routine).

(2) *Two typical converts.*

- (a) Simon Magus, the spurious convert. vv. 9-24,

1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high

There was:

Intellectual faith. v. 13.

External baptism. v. 13.

Constant association (with God's people). v. 13.

Continual eye-witness (of supernatural power). v. 13.

But: His heart was unchanged. v. 21.

His sin-chains were unbroken. v. 23.

His tendencies were untouched. vv. 18-19.

His evil influence was unaltered. v. 23 (note).

In other words, he was not a 'new creature' (2 Cor. v. 17).

(b) The eunuch, the sincere convert. vv. 27-39.

A sincere man. v. 27. (Lived up to his light).

A true seeker. v. 28. (Bible in hand).

A humble soul. v. 31. (Ready to be taught).

A feeler after Christ. vv. 32-4. (Close to the cross).

An obedient believer. v. 38.

A joyful Christian. v. 39.

Notice the means used for his conversion, (1) God's house (v. 27), (2) God's word (v. 28), and (3) God's servant (v. 35).

CHAPTER IX

1-31. ST. PAUL'S CONVERSION AND FIRST LABOURS

The importance of the apostle's conversion is emphasized by the fact that we have no less than three accounts of it in the Acts (chapters ix. xxii. xxvi). As he was God's 'chosen vessel' for conveying the Gospel to the Gentiles, the interest of the later history, after the episode of the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles by St. Peter in the house of Cornelius, concentrates itself on his special work, in accordance with the missionary purport of the Book. Ever since the death of Stephen, Saul of Tarsus has been kept in view by incidental notices (viii. 1, 3; ix. 1). Now he makes his submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. His conversion is a great land-mark on the high-road of missionary progress.

priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the 2 synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound

1. Breathing] Literally 'breathing in', as though inhaling them. 'Threatening and slaughter' were, so to speak, the very atmosphere in which he lived, and which he breathed out in fierce hatred against the Christians. The verb is peculiar to this verse. It may well continue the figure of an infuriated animal suggested by viii. 3. It is expressive of impassioned zeal, one of Saul's most striking characteristics all through his history. Cf. Gal. i. 13; 1 Tim. i. 13.

Threatening and slaughter] The former of these words has already occurred in iv. 17, 29; the latter is the one usually rendered 'murder'. We see to what terrible excesses false religious zeal may lead a man.

The disciples of the Lord] 'Disciples' is a common name for the followers of Christ in the Acts (Introd. VI. 5). The word 'Lord' is very prominent in this section (vv. 1, 5, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17), and lays stress on the power and authority of the ascended Saviour in His dealings with this strong opponent of the Gospel.

2. Asked of him letters] Cf. xxii. 4, 5; xxvi. 9-11. Saul led the van in the persecution of the Christians, as all the notices of that period shew, and was held in the highest repute on that account by the Jewish authorities (Gal. i. 14; Phil. iii. 6). He is seen here as a volunteer to carry the war to distant cities (xxvi. 11). In later years, he will be seen volunteering for the missionary work of the Gospel in far more distant lands.

Damascus] In Old Testament times it was the capital of Syria. It is situated on one of the most fertile plains in the world, about 2,200 feet above the level of the sea, a plain watered by the river Chrysorrhoe and abundant in fruit trees and grain crops. It is about sixty miles from the sea coast, and was once the highway of traffic to the East. Under the Greek regime, it was eclipsed by the greater importance of the

3 to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, it came to pass
that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there
4 shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he

new capital, Antioch (xi. 20). It has again, however, established its former superiority and is a large city with 150,000 inhabitants. A large colony of Jews, who had several synagogues, resided there. It is clear that there were Christians there also, possibly the fruit of the day of Pentecost. Its distance from Jerusalem is about a hundred and sixty miles, N.E.

The Way] Cf. xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 14, 22; The word 'way' is used in a metaphorical and ethical sense, to denote a course of life. It here indicates that direction and course of life which are determined by faith in Jesus Christ, and is practically equivalent to 'the Christian religion'. The word 'Marga' (way) is employed in a similar metaphorical and religious sense in India. We shall remember too, how the Buddhistic system for attaining 'Nirvana' is called the fourfold 'Noble Path'. We have in the New Testament:—

- (a) The way of God (or, 'the Lord'). Acts xviii. 25, 26.
- (b) The way of peace. Luke i. 79; Rom. iii. 17.
- (c) The way of truth. 2 Pet. ii. 2.
- (d) The way of righteousness. 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Men or women] See viii. 3, 12, notes.

To Jerusalem] To be tried and punished, as ecclesiastical offenders, by the Sanhedrin. That Council was allowed considerable jurisdiction by the Romans, though it had not the power of life and death.

3. Suddenly] An adverb found again in Mark xiii. 36; Luke ii. 13; ix. 39; Acts xxii. 6, verses which afford an interesting study. Saul's was, in one sense at least, a 'sudden conversion'.

Shone round about] A verb only used in connexion with this incident (xxii. 6). More literally, 'flashed round about him (like lightning)'.

fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, 5 Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*, I am Jesus whom

A light out of heaven] It was a miraculous and supernatural light, transcending the brightness of the noonday sun (xxvi. 13). In the radiance of that light, Saul obtained a real and objective vision of the ascended and glorified Redeemer (1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8). That vision altered the whole current of his life.

4. Fell upon the earth] Overcome and confounded (cf. Dan. x. 8-9; Rev. i. 17); prostrate at the feet of his conqueror. Those who journeyed with him also fell terrified upon the ground (xxvi. 13-14), though, unlike him, they 'beheld no man' (v. 7).

Heard a voice] He heard a voice speaking to him in definite and articulate words; whereas those who travelled with him only heard the sound of a voice but caught no words. This appears from the difference in the Greek construction used in v. 7, and accounts for the statement of xxii. 9. To Saul, the voice brought a distinct message. It was a personal voice to an individual soul.

Saul, Saul] The Greek word used here,—as also in xxii. 7; xxvi. 14,—is not the usual one for Saul, but is a transliteration of the Hebrew original, 'Shaûl, Shaûl'. We are told in xxvi. 14 that our Lord spoke in the Hebrew tongue.

In St. Luke's writings, the repetition of a name like this seems always to imply rebuke or warning. Thus we have 'Martha, Martha' (Luke x. 41); 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem' (Luke xiii. 34); 'Simon, Simon' (Luke xxii. 31).

Why persecutest thou Me?] See xxvi. 14, note. The head is so intimately bound up with all His members (1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. i. 22-3) that every stroke which they undergo is really a blow falling upon Him (cf. Isa. lxiii. 9; Zech. ii. 8; Matt. x. 40).

5. I am Jesus whom thou persecutest] The pronouns are both emphatic. It is as though Christ said, 'I the glorified

6 thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city,
 7 and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And
 the men that journeyed with him stood speechless,
 hearing the ¹ voice, but beholding no man.
 8 ¹ Or, *sound* And Saul arose from the earth; and when
 his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led

Lord whose glory thou beholdest am the self-same Jesus whom thou, in thy mad presumption, art so grievously persecuting; know and feel the greatness of thy sin.'

6. Rise] The constant recurrence of this imperative in the Acts is remarkable (viii. 26; ix. 11, 34, 40; x. 13, 20, 26; xiv. 10; xxii, 10, 16; xxvi. 16). Cf. xxii. 10. It is by commands that the Lord tests the obedience of our faith.

7. That journeyed with] A compound verb peculiar to this verse. We know nothing as to the associates in question.

Stood] See v. 4, note. They had, apparently, risen from the ground before Saul.

Speechless] Struck dumb by astonishment. The word is peculiar to this verse.

Hearing the voice] See v. 4, note. What produced *conversion* in Saul produced only *confusion* and *consternation* in them. So still, the word of the Lord Jesus is a message of salvation to some, while it is only an empty sound to others.

8. Saul arose] He was obedient to his new Master (v. 6). All blessings lie in the pathway of the obedience of faith. Cf. xxvi. 19.

Saw nothing] The brilliance of the dazzling light of the Lord's glory had blinded him (xxii. 11).

Led him by the hand] A verb peculiar to this one incident (xxii. 11). The leader was now led; the proud humbled. He who would have entered Damascus a haughty persecutor now enters it, so to speak, a helpless captive.

him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, 10 named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And 11 the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go to the street

9. He was three days, etc.] We are reminded of Jonah and his prayer of penitence (Jonah i. 17; ii. 1-10). We are told that Saul fasted (v. 9) and prayed (v. 11); and we cannot be far wrong in supposing that those three days witnessed his deep contrition, true repentance, and genuine consecration (Jer. xxxi. 19). It is men whose conversion is deep and thorough that make strong Christians and earnest workers.

10. A certain disciple] See v. 1, note. It was against just such disciples that Saul's fury and zeal had been directed. He is now to receive help and grace through one of those against whom he had breathed threatenings and murder.

Ananias] See ch. v. 1, note. How great the contrast between Ananias the hypocrite and Ananias the saint. This man, by his consistent life, commended his religion to all (xxii. 12).

A vision] See vii. 31, note. We notice the simultaneous preparation which went on in the hearts of Ananias and Saul for the fulfilment of God's special purpose; as afterwards in the hearts of Peter and Cornelius.

11. Arise, and go] See viii. 26; ix. 6, notes.

The street which is called Straight] There is still a long straight street, with the same name, running through the city of Damascus.

Judas] We know nothing of this man, but he was probably a devout Jew, rather than a Christian.

Tarsus] The chief city of Cilicia (vi. 9, note). It was situated on a fertile plain about ten miles from the sea. Its harbour was a sort of lake called Rhegma, into which the river Cydnus

which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, 12 he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he 13 might receive his sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil 14 he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call 15 upon thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy

flowed, passing through the city on its way; but ships could also sail right up to Tarsus itself. A great trade route passed through the town across Mt. Taurus to the inner parts of Asia Minor. It was an ancient and characteristically oriental city, but was transformed into a Greek foundation under the Seleucid kings, about 170 B.C. They doubtless planted a Jewish colony there, according to their usual policy. On passing into Roman hands, in the first century B.C., it received various favours, such as the privilege of enjoying its own laws, etc., and became a centre of Roman influence. Its zeal for Greek education and civilization had made it, with Athens and Alexandria, one of the three great university cities of the Mediterranean world. In particular, it had sent forth some famous teachers of the Stoic philosophy. See also Introd. V.

Behold he prayeth] The *persecutor* was transformed into a *petitioner*. Men who honestly seek God's will and guidance will give themselves unto prayer.

13. But Ananias] His fears and scruples were shared by the Church at Jerusalem (v. 26). It seemed incredible that so fierce a persecutor could become a genuine disciple.

Saints] It is only in this chapter (vv. 32, 41) and in xxvi. 10 this term is applied, in the Acts, to Christians. It marks their separation from sin to God and to His service, and is commonly used in the Epistles.

14. That call upon Thy name] See ii. 21, note. In 1 Cor. i. 2, as here, the expression is used in close juxtaposition with

way: for he is a 'chosen vessel unto me, ^{1 Gr. vessel of election.} to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him 16

the word 'saints'. Christians are defined, thus, to be those who invoke the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and worship. The metaphor is readily understood in India, where the calling on the names of their deities is so common a practice among the people. But, to Christians, it connotes a deep reverence and trust and a genuinely spiritual worship.

15. A chosen vessel] Literally 'a vessel of election (or choice)'. The metaphor is probably derived from the vessels made by potters for various purposes (cf. Jer. xviii. 1-6; xxii. 28; li. 34). Just as we use vessels to contain and carry divers substances, so God uses His people to contain and carry something of His grace and power. The Sanskrit word 'pâtra' is similarly used in India in a metaphorical sense to denote man as a recipient, etc. St. Paul frequently uses the simile in his Epistles. Thus we have (a) A vessel unto honour, Rom. ix. 21.

(b) Vessels of mercy, Rom. ix. 23.

(c) Earthen vessels, 2 Cor. iv. 7 (carrying heavenly treasure).

(d) A vessel . . . sanctified and meet for the master's use, 2 Tim. ii. 21.

What is of paramount importance is that Christ's 'vessels' should be clean and sanctified.

My name] See iii. 6, note. The treasure which the 'vessel' is to carry is God's grace and glory as revealed in Jesus Christ. As the 'name' stands for the revealed person, we may say that the treasure is Christ Himself. Note the recurrence of the 'name' in these verses. We see Saul:—

(a) Persecuting the votaries of that name. v. 14.

(b) Carrying to others the grace of that name. v. 15.

(c) Suffering for the sake of that name. v. 16. And we magnify the Saviour's power which produced so mighty a transformation.

Before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel] The order is noticeable. 'The Gentiles' come first, for he

how many things he must suffer for my name's sake
 17 And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which

was to be their apostle, and God's missionary purpose thus shews itself. Next we have 'kings', for Paul preached the Gospel as well to Roman governors as to king Agrippa (chapter xxvi) and probably to the emperor Nero himself (2 Tim. iv. 17). 'The children of Israel' come last, because, though he often preached to the Jews, it was not his special province, others than he being the apostles of the circumcision. See also xxvi. 16-18, notes.

16. 'I'] Emphatic, as though to say 'you perform your errand and do your part; and I, for My part, will execute My purpose and reveal to Saul My will'.

How many things he must suffer] St. Paul learned the lesson and realized all through his ministry that suffering is inseparable from earnest Christian service (xiv. 22; xx. 23; Phil. i. 29; Col. i. 24; 1 Thess. ii. 2; 2 Thess. i. 4-6; 2 Tim. ii. 2-3). For a succinct account of some of his sufferings for the Gospel's sake, see 2 Cor. xi. 23-33.

17. **Laying his hands on him]** See vi. 6, note. The action here was alike a sign of healing and a token of the impartation of the Holy Spirit (viii. 17), as the context shews. It is noteworthy that the hands laid on Saul were not those of an apostle but those of a private Christian. Cf. Gal. i. 1, 11, 12; ii. 6.

Brother Saul] The word 'brother' shews that Ananias now fully accepted him as a fellow-Christian. Cf. i. 15, note, and Introd. VI. 5. The name 'Saul' is in its Hebrew form 'Shaül', as in v. 4.

The Lord] See v. 1, note. As though to say 'Your Master and mine'.

(Even) Jesus] See v. 5. Saul had learned now that Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord of glory.

thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And 18 straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales. and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. 19

Who appeared unto thee] See v. 3, note. The verb is the same as in vii. 30, 35; xiii. 31. The appearance to Saul was as real and objective as that of the risen Christ to His disciples during the forty days. Cf. xxvi. 16.

Be filled with the Holy Ghost] See Introd. VI. 1; also ii. 4, note. We have here an instance of a man filled with the Spirit almost from the very day of his conversion (cf. ii. 38-39). God is not slack to endue men with His Spirit. The hindrance and delay are to be sought in their reluctance or unbelief or disobedience.

18. Fell from] A compound verb peculiar to this verse. It was used, technically, by physicians of the falling off of scales from the eyelids after an operation, and of particles from the diseased parts of the body. It has thus a distinct medical ring about it.

Scales] This word, also peculiar to this verse, is the medical term for the particles or scaly substance thrown off from the body. Passages can be cited from Greek medical writers in which the verb 'fall from' and this noun occur together, as here. We have thus another piece of incidental evidence to the fact that St. Luke, the writer, was a physician. The account of Ananias's visit is fuller in chapter xxii, which see.

Was baptized] See ii. 38; viii. 36, 38. He did not hesitate to proclaim himself an avowed follower of Jesus Christ. Men who shrink from such open profession in India will do well to ponder carefully the histories of the Ethiopian eunuch and Saul of Tarsus (cf. Rom. x. 8-13). In this case, baptism was administered to the future apostle by a Christian layman, a fact which shews that clerical baptism is not essential to the validity of the sacrament, however desirable it may be, and is for the sake of Church order.

And he was certain days with the disciples which
 20 were at Damascus. And straightway in the synagogues

19. Took food] A touch of nature worthy of St. Luke, whose human sympathies are so strong (cf. ii. 46; xiv. 17; xxvii. 36, 38). Saul would need refreshment after his three days' abstinence.

Was strengthened]-A Lukan verb, found again only in Luke xxii. 48, a striking parallel.

Certain days] The same phrase occurs in x. 48; xv. 36; xvi. 12; xxiv. 24; xxv. 13. It denotes a period of comparatively short duration.

With the disciples] See v. 1, note. He who once breathed threatening and slaughter against them now finds his highest joy, as one of their number, in their company. He openly identifies himself with them. In so doing, he shews the error of those who claim that they are 'Christians at heart' while declining to throw in their lot outwardly with the Christian Church.

20. Straightway] Many place St. Paul's visit to Arabia (Gal. i. 15-17) between vv. 19 and 20, being of opinion that he sought retirement with God before entering upon public ministry. Others consider that it intervenes between vv. 21 and 22; while others, again, would place it after v. 22 and before v. 23. St. Luke has omitted all mention of it as not falling in with the special scope of his missionary history. We know from Gal. i. 17 that Paul returned from Arabia to Damascus again, and Gal. i. 16 (immediately) proves that his retirement took place very soon after his conversion. Though we cannot say certainly at what point this narrative is to be interrupted to make room for it, yet, on the whole, it seems best to insert it between vv. 21 and 22. The word 'straightway' of the text renders a break after v. 19 highly improbable.

In the synagogues] See vi. 9, note. These were the very synagogues to which he had carried letters of credit from the

he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. And 21 all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havock of them which called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. . But Saul increased the more in strength, 22

Sanhedrin, as the champion of Judaism (v. 2). Hereafter, he was to preach the Gospel in many such places of worship (xiii. 5, 14; xiv. 1; xvii. 1, 10; xviii. 4, 19; xix. 8).

Proclaimed] As a herald (viii. 5, note).

Jesus that He is the Son of God] This is the only place in the Acts where our Lord is explicitly called 'the Son of God'. St. Paul had seen His glory so clearly that he fearlessly claims that Jesus of Nazareth is not only the Messiah but also the very and eternal Son of God.

21. Were amazed] See ii. 7, 12; viii. 9, 11, 13. We can imagine the amazement which would result if a strong Mussalman opponent of Christianity were suddenly to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Son of God in the great mosques of Delhi and Lucknow; or if a violent anti-Christian Buddhist preacher were, unexpectedly, to expound the Gospel, as a sincere convert, in the 'Temple of the Tooth' at Kandy.

Made havock] This verb only occurs again in Gal. i. 13, 23, where St. Paul uses it himself to describe his former violence against the Christian Church.

Which called on this name] See v. 14, note.

22. Increased the more in strength] Literally 'was continually strengthened more (and more)'. The verb is a different one from that used in v. 19. It suggests inward and spiritual strength, obtained in the Lord. The following texts in which it occurs will well repay study: Rom. iv. 20; Eph. vi. 10; Phil. iv. 13; 1 Tim. i. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 1; iv. 17; Heb. xi. 34.

Confounded] See ii. 6, note.

and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

23' And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took
24 counsel together to kill him: but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day

Proving] The word means 'to establish a conclusion by putting things side by side and comparing them'. Paul doubtless compared the Messianic prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures with the facts of the life and death of Jesus Christ. The verb is found again in xvi. 10; xix. 38; Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 2, 19, with different renderings.

23. Many days] Literally 'sufficient days', a phrase found again in v. 43; xviii. 18; xxvii. 7. Cf. 'sufficient time' (viii. 11; xiv. 3; xxvii. 9). It denotes a period of considerable duration. From Gal. i. 18, we learn that a period of 'three years' in all covered his retirement to Arabia and his double residence in Damascus. According to Jewish computation, this may denote any space of time from two to three years. Of this, the greater portion was, most likely, spent in Damascus.

Took counsel together] As their co-religionists had done against our Lord (Matt. xxvi. 4; John xi. 53, where the same verb occurs).

24. Plot] A noun employed only in the Acts. It is used again in xx. 3, 19; xxiii. 30, always of plots against the life of Paul. From the very beginning, attempts were made on the life of this bold evangelist.

Watched] 'They kept watching narrowly and closely'. The verb is found again in Mark iii. 2; Luke vi. 7; xiv. 1; xx. 20; Gal. iv. 10,—in the first four of which passages it is used of the action of His enemies in closely watching our Lord. We have here an undesigned coincidence with 2 Cor. xi. 32-3,—where we read that the ethnarch under king Aretas guarded the gates in order to apprehend Paul. Aretas was king of Arabia Petraea. We do not know how Damascus came into his hands at that time, but it can hardly have been without Roman consent. Coins which are extant prove that it was

and night that they might kill him: but his disciples 25 took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to 26 join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

under direct Roman administration in A.D. 33-4, and again in A.D. 62-3. It must, therefore, have come into Aretas' possession subsequent to A.D. 34; and Caligula (A.D. 37-41), who encouraged independent kingdoms in the East, is the emperor most likely to have conferred the city on the Arabian sovereign. These dates admirably suit the chronology adopted in this commentary, which gives A. D. 38 as the year in question (Introd. VII). A comparison of the two accounts of this incident makes it clear that the Jews secured the ethnarch's favour and co-operation in their attempt to seize Paul.

25. His disciples] Converts won to Christ by his earnest work in Damascus. His ministry was fruitful from the very first. For 'disciples' see vv. 1, 10, 19, notes.

Through the wall] That is, through a window in the wall (2 Cor. xi. 33). Cf. Joshua ii. 15; 1 Sam. xix. 12.

Basket] The word which is used in Matt. xv. 37; xvi. 10; Mark viii. 8, 20, in connexion with the feeding of the four thousand. It seems to denote a large provision basket, made of ropework or other soft material.

26. When he was come to Jerusalem] We have an independent account of this event in Gal. i. 18-20, where we are told that one of his special objects in the visit was to make St. Peter's acquaintance.

He assayed] Repeatedly (imperfect tense).

To join himself] In fellowship, as one of them (ch. v. 13, note).

Disciples] The constant repetition of this word in this chapter is remarkable (vv. 1, 10, 19, 25, 36, 38).

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name
28 of Jesus. And he was with them going in and going
29 out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the

Were all afraid] Their fear continuing for some time (imperfect tense). They naturally suspected that he was the old persecutor-wolf attempting to creep into the fold in sheep's clothing, the better to catch the sheep. Cf. Ananias's doubt (v. 13).

27. Barnabas] See iv. 36. He may have known Saul before, since Cyprus and Cilicia were not far distant from each other, and the schools of Tarsus were famous and attracted students from far and near. However that may be, it was like the character of Barnabas, 'the son of consolation', to play the mediator (cf. xi. 23-4).

To the apostles] That is, to Peter and James the Lord's brother, as we gather from Gal. i. 18-19. The other apostles were absent from Jerusalem, no doubt on special work.

Preached boldly] One word in the Greek, a Paulo-Lukan verb (v. 29; xiii. 46; xiv. 3; xviii. 26; xix. 8; xxvi. 26; Eph. vi. 20; 1 Thess. ii. 2). Freedom and boldness of speech characterize Christ's witnesses in the Acts.

28. With them] In communion and fellowship, as he had been 'with the disciples' in Damascus (v. 19). We know from Gal. i. 18 that his visit only lasted fifteen days. He was probably the guest of St. Peter.

29. Spake and disputed] Frequently (imperfect tenses). The verb 'disputed', while it occurs several times in the Gospels, is only used again in the Acts in vi. 9. There Stephen was the disputant, and Saul one of his chief opponents. Now the tables are turned, and Saul is the Christian disputant, Stephen's true successor.

1 Grecian Jews; but they went about to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they ^{1 Gr. Hellenists.} 30

The Grecian Jews] See vi. 1, note. Possibly men of the very Hellenistic synagogues which had withstood Stephen (vi. 9), and whose champion Saul had formerly been. It was as though the leader of the Ārya Samāj, become a true Christian, had returned to convince his former co-religionists at their own head-quarters.

Went about] An exclusively Lukan verb (Luke i. 1; Acts xix. 13), meaning 'to put one's hand to any work'. This was the second attempt to kill Paul since his conversion (v. 23). Worsted in argument, they had recourse to desperate plans. It was somewhere about this juncture that the apostle had that vision in the temple which is narrated in xxii. 17-21. What follows in the next verse accords, from the human side, with the Lord's injunction as there recorded.

30. The brethren] See i. 15, note, and Intro. VI. 5. They had now fully recognized Paul as a 'brother' in the Lord.

Cæsarea] See viii. 40, note. Perhaps he made Philip's acquaintance there, *en route*.

Tarsus] See v. 11, note. There we lose sight of him till Barnabas fetches him from thence in xi. 25, except that we know that he worked as an evangelist during at least part of the intermediate period in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21) and founded churches there (xv. 23, 41).

So] Or 'therefore'. The chief opponent Saul was now a convert. Political events, too, favoured the Church, for the attention of the Jews was mainly concentrated on the attempts of the emperor Caligula to set up his image for worship in the temple at Jerusalem. Their suspense only ceased with his death (A. D. 41).

The church] See ch. v. 11, note. The word is used here in the sense of the whole body (singular number), rather than as denoting individual congregations. That congregations existed in all Judæa and Samaria follows from viii. 1, 5-12, corroborated

brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

by Gal. i. 22. We only read of those of 'Galilee' in this verse, but the fact that most of our Lord's disciples were Galilæans and our knowledge of the dispersion of believers far and wide throughout Palestine (viii. 4; xi. 19) make the presence of Christian congregations there natural.

Being edified] 'Built up continually' (present participle). The metaphor of a building in course of construction is frequently employed in the New Testament (xx. 32; 1 Thess. v. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 5). Internal progress, rather than external growth, is intended here.

The fear of the Lord] A phrase found elsewhere only in 2 Cor. v. 11. Cf. ch. v. 11. It denotes that holy reverence which prompts men to do God's will and abstain from evil (Phil. ii. 12-13).

The comfort of Holy Ghost] The word for 'comfort' (paracletis) corresponds to the Holy Spirit's title 'the Paraclete'. His comfort must have been very real in the peace which followed the storm of persecution. The word means far more, however, than comfort. It includes the ideas of 'help', 'encouragement', and 'exhortation' (iv. 36, note). He exhorts, advises, helps, encourages, and comforts those who obey Him. While 'the fear of the Lord' kept the Christians humble and watchful, the Spirit's help and cheer made them glad and confident and strong.

Was multiplied] Continually (imperfect tense). Outward extension is here specially in view. The same verb occurs in vi. 1, 7; vii. 17; xii. 24. Thus, once more, Satan's attempt to check the Church's progress by violent persecution was over-ruled by God's grace to promote its rapid extension. }

32-43. PETER AT LYDDA AND JOPPA

We now come to the last 'acts' of St. Peter recorded in this history (with the exception of his speech in chapter xv). They occurred during St. Paul's residence in Cilicia, after his departure

So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and 31 Samaria had peace, being ¹ edified ; and, ¹ Gr. *buildded* walking ² in the fear of the Lord and ² in the ^{up.} comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied. ² Or, *by*

And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all 32 parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named 33 Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years ; for he was

from Jerusalem. The interest in them centres mainly in the conversion of Cornelius and the opening of the door of the Gospel to the Gentiles. The incidents which transpired at Lydda and Joppa are clearly introductory to the events of chapter x.

32. Went throughout] See viii. 4, note. Peter's itinerating tour probably combined the superintendence and edification of existing churches with evangelistic preaching to non-Christian Jews (cf. viii. 14-25).

Saints] See v. 13, note.

Lydda] Called 'Lod' in the Old Testament (1 Chron. viii. 12 ; Ezra ii. 33 ; Neh. vii. 37 ; xi. 35), and still bearing the name 'Ludd'. It is situated in the fertile plain of Sharon, about ten or twelve miles south-east of Joppa on the way to Jerusalem. In old times, the great caravan route from Babylon to Egypt passed through it. At the time of Peter's visit, it was still a town of considerable importance.

33. Æneas] The name is Greek. The man was probably a Hellenistic Jew. We cannot tell whether he was actually a Christian or not, though the context favours that supposition.

' Bed] Rendered 'couch' in ch. v. 15, which see. Besides the two words for a sick-bed used in the Acts (v. 15), St. Luke employs two others in his Gospel, the one in v. 18 ; viii. 16 ; xvii. 34 ; and the other in v. 19, 24. ³ This variety of description bespeaks the physician.

54 palsied. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ
 healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straight-
 35 way he arose. And all that dwelt at Lydda and in
 Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.
 36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named

Eight years] This notice also suggests a professional interest (cf. iii. 2; iv. 22; xiv. 8; Luke xiii. 11).

He was palsied] A decidedly medical term (viii. 7, note).

34. Jesus Christ healeth thee] Cf. iii. 6, 12-13. He lays emphasis on the fact that it is Jesus Christ who is the healer, and not himself. Most likely, he discerned in Æneas something of true faith (iii. 16; xiv. 9).

Make thy bed] The tense of the imperative (aorist) shews that the bed was to be made then and there, upon the spot, as a token of complete recovery. He was at once to do for himself what others had been doing for him for years. For 'arise', see ix. 6, note.

35. Sharon] It has the definite article with it, indicating the well-known fertile plain of that name (Isa. xxxv. 2) extending from Joppa to Mt. Carmel, between the central mountains of Palestine and the Mediterranean Sea.

Turned] See iii. 19, note. The same expression 'turned to the Lord' occurs in xi. 21, and a similar one 'turn to God' in xiv. 15; xv. 19; xxvi. 20. Philip the evangelist may possibly have prepared the way at Lydda for this great movement (viii. 40).

36. Joppa] See 2 Chron. ii. 16; Ezra iii. 7; Jonah i. 3. It was built on an elevated piece of rocky ground which made it conspicuous to vessels approaching that coast. It was, and still is, the port of Jerusalem. It is the only harbour which affords shelter for shipping between Egypt and Mt. Carmel. Its modern name is Jaffa. Philip probably preached there on his way from Gaza to Cæsarea (viii. 40), and other Christians may have proclaimed the Gospel there.

Tabitha, which by interpretation is called ¹ Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did. And it came to pass in ^{1 That is, Gazelle.} those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, intreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by

37

38

39

Disciple] The only place in the New Testament where the feminine form of the noun is employed.

Tabitha] An Aramaic word meaning 'gazelle'. The Greek equivalent is 'Dorcas'. The former (Aramaic) emphasizes the animal's gracefulness and beauty; the latter its bright eyes and tender gaze. These names were given to women as expressive of their gracefulness and tenderness.

Full of good works and alms-deeds] She must have been a woman of some means. The expression 'good works' is a general one and may include all kinds of pious actions. The other word 'alms-deeds' speaks, specifically, of her works of charity and gifts to the poor (iii. 2-3). Tabitha is an example of what a godly woman should be and do.

37. Upper chamber] An exclusively Lukan word (i. 13; ix. 39; xx. 8). These 'upper chambers' of the Acts were the scenes of remarkable events.

38. Nigh unto Joppa] Only about ten or twelve miles distant.

The disciples] See vv. 1, 19, 25-26.

Delay not] A verb not found elsewhere. 'Do not scruple, or be reluctant, or hesitate to come.'

39. The widows] See vi. 1, note. The recipients of Tabitha's bounty. We mark again the Christians' care of widows.

him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments
 40 which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But
 Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed;
 and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And
 she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat
 41 up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up;

Shewing] The Greek (middle voice) suggests that they exhibited the garments on themselves, as they wore them. Coats were close-fitting tunics worn next to the body; while garments were loose cloaks worn over them.

Made] 'Was in the habit of making' (imperfect tense). From this incident, gatherings of Christian women to make garments for the poor have come to be called 'Dorcas meetings'.

40. Put them all forth] The very verb used in Matt. ix. 25 of Christ's sending out the crowd from the house before the raising of Jairus's daughter. The two incidents present other points of resemblance.

Kneeled down and prayed] See vii. 60, note. The power for raising Dorcas must be invoked from on high. Cf. 1 Kings xvii. 19-23; 2 Kings iv. 33.

Tabitha arise] If Peter spoke in Aramaic, the words would be 'Tabitha, cumi', and would curiously resemble the 'Talitha, cumi' of Mark v. 41.

Opened her eyes] Cf. 2 Kings iv. 35.

Sat up] A Lukan verb, used again only in Luke vii. 15, of the raising of the widow's son at Nain.

41. Gave her his hand] Cf. iii. 7; Mark. v. 41.

The saints] See vv. 13, 32.

Presented her alive] See i. 3, note; and cf. 1 Kings xvii. 23; 2 Kings iv. 37; Luke vii. 15. We may notice the points of contrast presented in the miracles performed at Lydda and Joppa respectively. In the one case, the miracle was wrought on a man; in the other, on a woman. In the former instance,

and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa: 42 and many believed on the Lord. And it came to 43 pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

Peter went of his own accord; in the latter he was sent for. In the one case, recovery was instantaneous; in the other, it was gradual (opened her eyes, sat up). With Aeneas, life was present, but paralyzed; with Dorcas, it was entirely absent. If miracles are signs of spiritual things, such points as these are suggestive. /

43. Many days] See v. 23, note. His stay there was a prolonged one.

Simon a tanner] The word 'tanner' only occurs in connexion with this incident (x. 6, 32). That trade was regarded as unclean by the Jews, as having to do with the skins of dead animals. Their strong objections to it are shared by strict Hindus to-day, who abjure leather of every kind. Peter's continued residence in such a house was a sign that his Hebrew prejudices were weakened. It was also a special preparation for the work which lay next before him, in God's purpose—that of opening the doors of His kingdom to the Gentiles.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER IX

1. *Principal divisions.*

(1) An antagonist's conversion. vv. 1-31.

His submission. vv. 1-19.

His service. vv. 20-31.

(2) An apostle's campaign. vv. 32-43.

2. *Prominent topics.*

(1) The Lord dealing with the sinner. A complete conversion.

(a) His arresting power. v. 3.

(b) His convicting voice. v. 4.

(c) His informing grace. v. 5.

(d) His directing will. v. 6.

(e) His ordaining love. vv. 15-19.

1 Now *there was* a certain man in Casarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian

Purposing that Saul might receive sight. v. 17.
 " " " might be filled with the Spirit.
 v. 17.

" " " might carry His name. v. 15.
 " " " might suffer for His sake. v. 16.

- Saul (a) Saw a light. v. 3. He was arrested.
 (b) Fell upon the earth. v. 4. He was humbled.
 (c) Heard a voice. v. 4. He was convicted.
 (d) Inquired after Christ. v. 5. He was anxious.
 (e) Received instruction. v. 5. He was instructed.
 (f) Arose from the earth. v. 8. He was obedient.
 (g) Was led by the hand. v. 8. He was tractable.
 (h) Was without food, etc. v. 9. He was penitent.
 (i) Received his sight. v. 18. He was enlightened.
 (j) Was filled with the Spirit. v. 17. He was anointed.

And forthwith he set to work (v. 20).

- (2) The Lord directing His servant. A special service.
 (a) He chooses prepared instruments. v. 10 (xxii, 12).
 (b) He gives definite instructions. vv. 11, 12 (for finding the needy soul).
 (c) He meets all objections and difficulties. vv. 13-15.
 (d) He reveals His loving purpose. vv. 15, 16.
 (e) He grants success to the mission. vv. 17-19.
- (3) The Lord displaying His grace.
 (a) Healing the palsied. vv. 33-5.
 (b) Comforting the sorrowful. vv. 36-9.
 (c) Quickening the dead. vv. 40-2.
 (d) Preparing His messenger. v. 43.

CHAPTER X

The conversion of the semi-Gentile Samaritan schismatics and the admission into the Christian Body of the Ethiopian eunuch-proselyte (ch. viii.) are now succeeded by a further development of God's missionary work, the incorporation into the Church of a number of Gentiles. This, followed by the account of the evangelization of the 'Greeks' at Antioch

¹ band, a devout man, and one that feared God ²
¹ Or, *cohort* with all his house, who gave much alms to

(xi. 20-26), leads us a long way in the direction of St. Paul's special work in founding purely Gentile churches. The fact that St. Luke relates it in such detail shews that he regarded it as of great importance in the evolution of the missionary purpose of the Acts. As St. Peter had opened, by his preaching on the day of Pentecost, the doors of the kingdom of heaven to the Jews, so now, in accordance with his special commission (Matt. xvi. 19), he is privileged to throw them open to the Gentiles. The fact that many of the phenomena of the day of Pentecost were repeated in the house of Cornelius indicates, undoubtedly, that we have in this chapter the divinely authorized admission of the Gentiles to all the blessings of the Gospel. It is the real inauguration of the work which St. Paul afterwards took up and developed as the apostle of the Gentiles (cf. xv. 7-12). Though Cornelius was, in some sense, an adherent of Judaism (v. 2, note), yet he was not circumcised, and the company assembled in his house represented, beyond doubt, a Gentile Body (vv. 24-45).

1-33. CORNELIUS SENDS FOR PETER

I. **Caesarea]** See viii. 40, note.

Cornelius] The name of an illustrious Roman 'gens' or house, numbering among its scions the famous Scipios and Sullas. This centurion was evidently a Roman, and was perhaps connected with the house in question as a freedman.

Centurion] A subordinate officer, that is, in command of a hundred men. A Roman legion or regiment consisted of 6,000 men, and was divided into ten cohorts, each containing 600 soldiers. These cohorts were subdivided into centuries, each of which was officered by a centurion. The centurions specifically mentioned in the New Testament were men of a liberal and kindly disposition (Matt. viii. 5-10; xxvii. 54; Acts xxii. 25-6; xxvii. 1, 3, 42-4).

The Italian band] 'Band' being equivalent to 'cohort' (margin). Cf. xxvii. 1. The cohort was called 'Italian' because,

3 the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the

though not forming part of the regular legionary troops of the empire (which were never stationed in provincial towns like Caesarea), it was composed, in all probability, of Italians, volunteer members of the auxiliary troops. Inscriptions have come to light which shew that there was such an Italian cohort in Syria both in the second century and in A.D. 69, and the presumption is that there was one there earlier still. We know that Caesarea was a garrison town, being the residence of the procurator of Judaea. Josephus mentions that five cohorts and a squadron of cavalry were stationed there.

2. **A devout man]** See also v. 7. An adjective found elsewhere only in 2 Pet. ii. 9. It means 'pious', both in divine and human relationships. The word used in viii. 2 is a different one. This one corresponds somewhat with that 'bhakti' which is so highly esteemed in India, though its etymology is different.

One that feared God] The same phrase occurs in vv. 22, 35; xiii. 16, 26; and a very similar one in xvi. 14; xviii. 7. It represents Gentiles who had given in their partial adherence to the Jewish faith, while still remaining uncircumcised. In other words, they had learned from the Jews to worship the true and living God, but had not thrown in their lot fully with Judaism. There must have been varying degrees of outward profession among them. Many attended service at the Jewish synagogues and conformed to certain rules laid down for them as the condition of intercourse with Jews (cf. xv. 20). Others were less pronounced in the profession of their faith. There are non-Christians in India to-day who stand toward the Gospel in a somewhat analogous position. They know that Christ is the Saviour of the world, but have not crossed the rubicon and joined the Christian Church by open baptism.

With all his house] That is, 'with all his household', family and dependents. Cf. xi. 14; xvi. 15, 31; xviii. 8. A man's piety, if it be genuine, will affect his home and friends.

day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon 4

Gave much alms] The Jews laid great stress on alms-giving as a mark of piety (Luke xii. 33; Acts ix. 36; xxiv. 17), just as, in India, such gifts of charity are regarded as part of the 'dharma' or prescribed practice of the householder. We must guard, however, against the idea of supposing that such gifts are meritorious in themselves. They may be only the ostentatious display of a proud spirit of self-righteousness (Matt. vi. 2, 3).

It is the disposition of the heart which decides the nature of religious and charitable actions. The whole context shews that, in the case of Cornelius, his pious actions were the outcome of a real faith in God, imperfect it is true, for he had not yet received full light (xi. 14), but sincere as far as it went.

To the people] That is, 'to the Jewish people' (λαός). The word is frequent in the Acts, with this special meaning.

Prayed to God alway] That is, to the true God (τοῦ θεοῦ) of whom he had learned from the Jewish Scriptures. The word rendered 'prayed' (δέομενος) suggests petitions arising from a sense of need. He observed the Jewish hours of prayer at home (v. 30), but the phrase 'alway' need by no means be confined to them. It is clear that he was engaged in prayer when he saw the angel, asking, doubtless, for fuller light and knowledge. It is sincere seeking souls which receive further and fuller grace (Jer. xxix. 13; Matt. vii. 7-8). Many a man in India would find the true God and eternal life if, like Cornelius, he would earnestly seek Him.

3. A vision] See vii. 31, note (sight).

Openly] An adverb found again only in Mark i. 45; John vii. 10. Cornelius was awake, not asleep. He saw the angel manifestly and clearly, beyond all suspicion of illusion.

The ninth hour] One of the Jewish hours of prayer (v. 30; iii. 1, note).

An angel of God] See i. 10; v. 19, notes.

him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner,

4. Fastening his eyes] See i. 10, note. Such a steady gaze would convince him the more fully of the reality of the appearance.

Affrighted] Soldiers are not easily frightened, but supernatural phenomena overawe even the bravest of men. This adjective is, with the solitary exception of Rev. xi. 13, peculiar to St. Luke (Luke xxiv. 5, 37; Acts xxiv. 25). It will be seen to denote uniformly, in the New Testament, the effect of terror produced by super-human forces.

For a memorial] A phrase only used elsewhere in connexion with Mary of Bethany who anointed our Saviour's head and feet (Matt. xxvi. 13; Mark xiv. 9). As her action of loving gratitude has caused her to be remembered wherever the Gospel is preached, so Cornelius's prayers and alms, rising like ascending incense, caused him to be specially remembered before God. In other words, they called attention to him as a seeking soul, honestly desirous of knowing and doing God's will.

5. To Joppa] See ix. 36, note. It was about thirty miles away.

Fetch] The verb in the original is peculiar to Acts (v. 22, 29; xi. 13; xxiv. 24, 26; xxv. 3).

Surnamed Peter] A name easily intelligible to a Gentile. It also distinguished him from other Simons.

6. By the seaside] Such a locality was suited to a tanner's trade, for which water is required. Moreover, Jewish prejudices required those who pursued such an occupation to reside outside the town. India is full of examples of people who have to 'dwell without', by reason of their caste and avocation.

whose house is by the sea side. And when the 7 angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and having 8 rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, 9 and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: and he 10 became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they

7. Household servants] The same word occurs again in Rom. xiv. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 18. It denotes servants more closely associated with the family than ordinary slaves.

A devout soldier] The same adjective as in v. 2. The centurion's piety spread to those under his command. This man acted as what we should now call an 'orderly' to Cornelius, waiting upon him with personal service. We note that the profession of arms is not inconsistent with the possession of real godliness.

Waited on him continually] See i. 14, note, for the same verb.

8. Rehearsed] A compound verb peculiar to St. Luke (Luke xxiv. 35; Acts xv. 12, 14; xxi. 19), with the one exception of John i. 18. It means 'to narrate in detail'.

9. Upon the housetop] We are familiar, in the east, with houses which have flat roofs, useful alike for meditation and for recreation.

The sixth hour] One of the Jewish hours of prayer (iii. 1, note). About midday. As in the case of Cornelius, it was while he was engaged in prayer that he received this new revelation of God's will.

10. Hungry] A non-classical word peculiar to this verse. The special form of the vision thus corresponded with his physical condition.

11 made ready, he fell into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners 12 upon the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth and 13 fowls of the heaven. And there came a voice to 14 him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not

A trance] See iii. 10 (amazement). Our word 'ecstasy'. It represents a state in which a man is transported beyond the normal action of the senses. Cf. 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

11. He beholdeth] A verb already met with in iii. 16; iv. 13; vii. 56; viii. 13; ix. 7, and denoting steady contemplation. Being used here in the (historic) present tense, it gives a graphic touch to the narrative.

The heaven opened] Cf. vii. 56.

A certain vessel] The Greek word for 'vessel' is a general one, and includes all kinds of utensils and implements. This one seems to have been a huge receptacle, in appearance resembling a large linen sheet and so probably white, let down from heaven as by four ropes attached to its corners. It was, therefore, most likely, square or rectangular in shape, and shallow enough for its contents to be easily visible to view. Many have seen in the 'four corners' a suggestion of the four quarters of the globe and so of the universality of God's grace.

12. All manner of four-footed beasts, etc.] Placed promiscuously together, with no distinction between clean and unclean. A fit type of all sorts and conditions of men.

13. Rise] See ix. 6, note. Peter was, apparently, on his knees in prayer.

Kill and eat] Such a command was startling to Jewish ears. It was as though a strictly orthodox Brahman were suddenly enjoined to eat meat and break caste by doing so.

so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice *came* unto him again 15 the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: and straight- 16 way the vessel was received up into heaven.

14. Not so . . . never . . . anything] Words of strong and vehement negation, quite characteristic of one whose nature was always eager and impulsive. He was horrified at the very suggestion of the thing. It outraged all his religious prejudices and ideas of social propriety. Cf. Ezek. iv. 14. Hindus will readily understand his shrinking from the very thought of it.

Common and unclean] By 'common' is meant 'profane', 'unhallowed'. The law of Moses prescribed certain animals as 'clean' or fit for food, and prescribed others as 'unclean' or unfit for food (Lev. xi; xx. 25-6; Deut. xiv. 3-21), and the Jews were most scrupulous in their observance of the distinction. One of the chief reasons why they regarded the Gentiles as 'unclean' and refused to associate with them, was because the latter did not observe these food distinctions.

India goes even further in such matters. The majority of modern orthodox Hindus, like the Buddhists, regard it as a sin to eat animal food of any kind. Their kitchens are regarded as defiled and their food as polluted by the mere presence, or even shadow, of a person of a (so-called) 'lower caste'. Like the Jews, again, they attach immense importance to purification ceremonies in connexion with their meals. And the caste system, in general, is bound up with questions of ceremonial purity and impurity, so that interdining on the part of those of different castes, or even those belonging to sub-divisions of the same caste, is practically prohibited. /

15. What God hath cleansed make not thou common] God was teaching Peter, by this special revelation, that the old distinction between Jew and Gentile, as regards religious status, is abrogated in Christ. In Him, there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither Englishman nor Indian, neither Brahman nor Sudra, and we shall seek to perpetuate at our peril ideas of

17 Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made
 18 inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate, and called and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed
 19 Peter, were lodging there. And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three
 20 men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and

racial and caste distinctions which have been abolished by the Gospel. To the Christian, at least, it is forbidden to despise, or to regard in any sense as defiled and unclean, those who belong to another race or class than his own. It were a sin to 'make common' what God has purified.

16. Thrice] For emphasis. If the vessel, with its heterogeneous contents, were 'received up into heaven', there could surely be no doubt about the advisability of receiving into the Christian Church Gentile believers of every race and kind.

17. Was much perplexed] The verb has already occurred in ii. 12; v. 24, where see notes. The Bezan reading is 'when Peter came to himself, he was much perplexed, etc'.

Vision] As in v. 3; see vii. 31, note.

Having made inquiry] This compound verb is found only here. It suggests that they had made diligent inquiry all through the town for Simon's house.

The gate] Rendered 'porch' in Matt. xxvi. 71. It means, properly, the passage leading from the street to the inner court of the house. We may translate 'gateway', or 'vestibule'. It occurs again in xii. 13-4; xiv. 13.

18. Called] As though to the door-keeper or inmates of the house.

Asked] The verb indicates careful inquiry (iv. 7, note).

19. Thought] A compound verb found only here, denoting 'to ponder carefully in the mind'.

go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them. And Peter went down to the men, and said, Behold, **21** I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius a centurion, **22** a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house,

The Spirit said] Mark His personality (cf. viii. 29). We note the perfect correspondence of the circumstances with the revelation of the vision. God will not leave His true servants in doubt as to His will.

Three men] Cf. v. 7; xi. 11. Many ancient authorities, however, read 'two men', in which case the soldier may be regarded as a guard for the two household servants. Other authorities omit the number altogether.

Thee] Emphatic. Peter, and none other, was the man needed for the special mission.

20. Arise] See ix. 6, note.

Nothing doubting] That is 'with no doubt as to the rightness of the step you are taking'. With a different punctuation, the verse may be rendered, 'Not doubting at all that I have sent thee'. In xi. 12, the same verb occurs, but in the active voice and so with a different shade of meaning (making no distinction).

21] The pronoun is emphatic. We need never hesitate to follow when we are sure that God Himself is leading.

22. One that feareth God] See v. 2, note.

Well reputed of . . . Jews] We are reminded of the story of the centurion in Luke vii. 2-5. The Jewish community at Caesarea was a very large one, and Cornelius was well known to them as at least a semi-proselyte.

Was warned (of God)] The verb so translated is found again with a similar significance in Matt. ii. 12, 22; Luke ii. 26;

23 and to hear words from thee. So he called them in and lodged them.

And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the morrow ¹they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen **25** and his near friends. And when it came to pass

24 ¹ Some ancient authorities read *he*.

Heb. viii. 5; xi. 7; xii. 25. It signifies the giving of a divine or authoritative direction, and was used by the pagan Greeks of oracular communications.

23. He lodged them] That is, 'he received and entertained them as guests'. In offering these Gentile strangers hospitality, St. Peter was taking the first step toward carrying out the lessons of the vision. It was as though an orthodox Brahman suddenly relaxed the strict rules of his caste and received 'Mléchas' or out-caste foreigners to his house and board. Such conduct, to the Hindus, would mean pollution to the house and gross (ceremonial) defilement to its occupants.

Certain of the brethren from Joppa] They were orthodox Jewish Christians (v. 45) and six in number (xi.12). St. Peter's wisdom in taking with him such companions as eye-witnesses of what might follow is abundantly evident from the subsequent history.

24. On the morrow] We see, therefore, that they spent a night *en route* (possibly at Apollonia), just as Cornelius's messengers had done on their way to Joppa (v. 9).

Was waiting] The same verb as in iii. 5 (expecting), which see. Cornelius was in dead earnest in seeking the way of truth, and all his thoughts and expectations were centred on Peter's mission.

His kinsmen and his near friends] Gentile relations and close acquaintances (v. 45). His solicitude for the spiritual welfare of those connected with him is remarkable (vv. 2, 7).

that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him 26 up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as 27 he talked with him, he went in, and findeth many come together: and he said unto them, Ye yourselves know 28

25. That Peter entered] That is, as it would seem, into the house. The entrance of v. 24 was into the city.

The Bezan text is here strikingly graphic. It reads (v. 25), 'As Peter was drawing near unto Caesarea, one of the bond servants announced that he was come, and Cornelius sprang forth and met him'. It suggests that a slave was stationed somewhere at a distance to watch for the apostle's approach and that when he ran to announce it, Cornelius hastened forth to meet him, perhaps to the gate of the city.

Fell down at his feet] An action common in the east, as we all know, on the part of inferiors and petitioners. We learn, from such passages as this, that it should be discouraged.

Worshipped him] Regarding him as a heaven-sent messenger or inspired teacher. An extreme reverence, almost amounting to worship, is offered by many in India to famous Gurus, Yogis, Fakirs, and others.

26. Stand up; I myself also am a man] Cf. xiv. 14; Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8-9. Such passages are conclusive against offering worship either to men, however saintly, or to angels. Christ, on the contrary, being more than human, accepted such homage as His due (Matt. ii. 11; viii. 2; ix. 18; xiv. 33; xv. 25; xx. 20; xxviii. 9, 17).

27. Talked with] A verb found only here in the New Testament. It means 'to hold converse with'.

Went in] Entered, that is, the room where the company was assembled. If, however, we adopt the Bezan reading of v. 25, it may possibly mean that he now entered Cornelius's house.

28. Ye yourselves know] With emphasis on the personal pronoun. The Gentiles knew, from bitter experience, what Jewish

¹ how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God shewed that I should not call any
 29 man common or unclean: wherefore also I came with out gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask therefore-
 30 with what intent ye sent for me. And Cornelius said,

habits of exclusiveness meant. There was no social intercourse between them.

It is an unlawful thing] A classical expression denoting that which is opposed to law and prescribed custom. The Jews had elaborated their system of social exclusiveness far beyond the simpler injunctions of the law of Moses, which related chiefly to the prohibition of marriage with heathen nations; just as caste distinctions in India have been vastly developed since Védic times. ♪

To join himself or come unto] For the former of these verbs, see ch. v. 13; viii 29; ix. 26. It is, of course, social intercourse which is intended here. Ordinary conversation and business transactions could not be avoided, but free and intimate intercourse was proscribed. The strict Jew would not sit on the same couch with his Gentile neighbour, or eat or drink from the same vessel with him. The caste system of this country is still more exclusive. It forbids personal contact with those of a (supposed) 'lower caste' as defiling, and regards even their shadow as polluting to all water vessels and cooking utensils. Intermarriage and interdining are, of course, out of the question among the different castes or even the numerous divisions of the same caste. Thus man is held aloof from his fellow-man.

(Yet) unto me, etc.] Now the apostle understands the meaning of the vision. The barriers between race and race are done away with for ever in the Gospel of Christ. The caste-spirit must yield to the Christ-spirit. We need to lay to heart this great lesson in India, not only between Indian and Indian, but also between

Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side. Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to

Englishman and Indian. For the 'race' spirit and the 'caste' spirit are both contrary to the Christ-spirit.

Common or unclean] See vv. 14-15. Let no Christian presume to regard any fellow man, whatever his origin, as anything but an object of love and friendship. It is sin, not anything else, which defiles.

30. Four days ago] On the first day, Cornelius saw his vision and despatched his messengers (vv. 3-8). On the second day, they reached Joppa and spent the night with Peter (vv. 9, 23). On the third day, they started on their return journey, with Peter and others (v. 23). And on the fourth day they arrived in Caesarea (v. 24) and Peter preached in Cornelius's house.

Until this hour I was keeping] See v. 3. This shews that Peter arrived at Cornelius's house about the ninth hour, i.e. about 3 p.m.

33. Thou hast well done] Cf. Matt. xii. 12; Mark vii. 37; Luke vi. 27; Jas. ii. 18, 19. The phrase sometimes, as here, was used as a sort of formula of thanks, as well as of approval or commendation. 7

In the sight of God] This and the following phrase (commanded of the Lord) shew that Cornelius and his friends had their expectations fixed on God Himself (Ps. lxii. 5). Peter was the messenger, but the message was the Lord's (cf. 1 Thess. ii. 13).

hear all things that have been commanded thee of
34 the Lord. And Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of
35 persons: but in every nation he that feareth him,
and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.

34-48. ST. PETER'S SERMON AND ITS RESULT

34. Opened his mouth] A phrase prelude an important and solemn utterance (viii. 35 ; xviii. 14).

I perceive] The Greek verb means 'to seize or grasp (with the mind)'. St. Peter says in effect, 'Of a truth I am getting a firm grasp of the great fact that God's grace embraces all classes of men without distinction'. The meaning of the heavenly vision was becoming clearer and clearer to him in the light of God's providential leadings.

No respecter of persons] One word in the original, found only here in this particular form; but the cognate verb occurs in Jas. ii. 9; and the corresponding noun (respect of persons) in Rom. ii. 11; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25; Jas. ii. 1. It represents a Hebraism 'to raise the face' and so 'to regard with favour'. In the passages cited above, the sense of 'regard with undue partiality' always prevails. The great lesson of this chapter is that, in the Gospel, all such partiality is done away. God looks with no distinctive favour on any race or class or caste. All alike stand on the common ground of spiritual need, and are judged according to ethical, not racial, standards. Indian and European, Brahman and Pariah are equally eligible for His grace and righteousness, through Jesus Christ.

35. He that feareth Him] Ramsay and others, having regard to the fact that this phrase usually connotes a proselyte or, more correctly, a semi-proselyte to Judaism (vv. 2, 22), understand Peter to mean that admission to the privileges of the Gospel, for Gentiles, lay through the door of Judaism; the wider conception of God's mercy being left for the special apprehension of St. Paul and his co-workers. There seems little doubt, however, that the expression is used here in its more general sense of *godly fear*. Cornelius represents a class who,

¹ Many ancient authorities read *He sent the word unto.*
² Or, *the gospel.*

¹ The word which he sent unto the children 36
of Israel, preaching ² good tidings of peace by
Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—that saying 37
ye yourselves know, which was published

though ignorant of the Gospel, honestly seek to live up to their light and to act on the dictates of their conscience (cf. Rom. ii. 10–16). Obedient to the truth, so far as he knew it, he had renounced idolatry and become a sincere worshipper of the one true God and an earnest seeker after still clearer light. When that light shined on him, he readily accepted it and basked in its radiance. We are not to isolate the expression from its context, but to view it in its proper setting and proportion. Those who quote Cornelius's example as illustrating their own spiritual position must shew his readiness to seek the way of life and to accept with gladness the Gospel of Christ.

Is acceptable to Him] The adjective is Paulo-Lukan (Luke iv. 19, 24; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Phil. iv. 18). The idea expressed is that the disposition of heart evidenced by Cornelius and men of his type is one which God can regard with favour, so as to meet and satisfy it. Cf. Ps. i. 23; cvii. 9. Though the centurion was not yet actually in a state of salvation (xi. 14), he was an earnest seeker after it. And those who seek shall find (Matt. vii. 7, 8). As Bengel says, what is predicated here is indifference as to a man's nationality, not indifference as to the nature of the religion which he professes. St. Peter's main point is that God regards with equal favour both Jew and Gentile.

36. The word which He sent] According to this reading, we must regard 'the word' as the object of the verb which follows later, 'ye know' and as being in apposition with the noun 'saying' of v. 37. The sentence means, therefore, 'Ye know the Gospel message which He sent through Jesus Christ to the children of Israel, namely, that saying which was published throughout all Judaea'. Some of the oldest MSS. however (see margin), omit the relative pronoun 'which', and then the construction is comparatively simple and we may read, 'He (God) sent the word (of the Gospel) unto the children of

throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after 38 the baptism which John preached; *even* Jesus of

Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ'. The 'word' thus becomes the object of the verb 'sent' and the sentence of v. 36 is complete in itself and grammatically independent of v. 37. For 'the word', as equivalent to 'the Gospel message', see ii. 41; iv. 4; vi. 4; viii. 4, 21; x. 44; xiv. 25; xvi. 6; xvii. 11; xviii. 5. St. Peter, in instructing these sincere inquirers, sets before them the main facts of the Gospel message, our Lord's life, ministry, death, resurrection, commission to His disciples, and His future epiphany as Judge,—leading up to His promise of the forgiveness of sins to all believers. We have thus a model for similar work under similar circumstances in the Mission Field.

Unto the children of Israel] The message had been sent primarily unto them (iii. 26; xiii. 26; Rom. i. 16), but it was intended for the Gentiles also in due course (Luke ii. 30-32), and St. Peter was now to be the privileged messenger of the Gospel unto them.

'Preaching good tidings] One word in the Greek, as in ch. v. 42; viii. 4, 12, 25, 35, 40. Cf. Isa. lii. 7; Nah. i. 15.

Peace] That is 'peace with God', through the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. v. 1; 2 Cor. v. 18-21; Col. i. 20-2). It probably includes also the thought that, in that peacemaker and His peace, the enmity which had long divided Jew and Gentile was abolished for ever (see Eph. ii. 14-18). Peace with God includes peace with our fellow-men (Luke ii. 14), and the clash and strife of nations, races, and castes should cease in the Christian Church.

Jesus Christ] We notice that *He* is the subject and centre of all the apostle's teaching in the verses which follow. St. Peter proclaimed *a person*. Christ is Christianity.

He is Lord of all] These words form a parenthesis. They assert our Saviour's lordship and unique authority. They also affirm His sovereign relationship to 'all' men, Jew and Gentile alike.

Nazareth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things 39

37. That saying] Many understand this as referring to the tidings about the Saviour which had gone forth far and wide through the preaching of John the Baptist. We may, however, after Hebrew usage, render 'that matter ye yourselves know which took place throughout all Judaea', in which case it is the mission of our Lord which is referred to rather than any 'saying'. Cf. Luke ii. 15; Acts v. 32. Compare in Urdu the double use of the word 'bát'.

Ye yourselves know] With emphasis on the personal pronoun. Cornelius and his friends had evidently heard something of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth, though they were ignorant alike of its full meaning and of its bearing on themselves.

Judaea] The word is apparently used here and in v. 39 in a free and wide sense as denoting the whole of Palestine.

After the baptism, etc.] See Matt. iv. 12-17. Our Lord's public ministry succeeded that of John the Baptist.

38. Even Jesus of Nazareth] The construction is broken, probably owing to the speaker's impetuous earnestness. This reading regards the words 'Jesus of Nazareth' as in apposition to 'that saying' of v. 37. The substance of the 'saying' or 'matter' (v. 37, note) in question was a person, Jesus of Nazareth. In Him all else centred.

Anointed] See Luke iv. 18; Acts iv. 27. At His baptism (Luke iii. 21-2). Hence His name of 'Christ', Messiah, the Anointed One.

Went about] See viii. 4, note.

Doing good] A verb peculiar to this verse, but we have a corresponding noun 'good deed' in iv. 9, which see. A cognate word is used in Luke xxii. 25 (benefactors). Our Saviour's life on earth was one of constant benefactions. He spent His days

which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a 40 tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave 41 him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose

not in philosophical speculations, after the fashion of many Indian sages, but in works of practical philanthropy.

Healing] A verb used far more frequently by St. Luke the physician than by other New Testament writers. It occurs eleven times in his Gospel and four times in the Acts (ix. 34; x. 38; xxviii. 8, 27). Medical missionaries and evangelists are, in their measure, following in the great Benefactor's steps.

All that were oppressed] The verb is only found again in Jas. ii. 6. It has a forcible meaning, 'all that were tyrannized over by the devil'. It refers, specially, to demoniacal possession, of which we know something in India, though it cannot be confined to that. For devil, see Satan (ch. v. 3).

39. Whom also they slew] See ii. 23; v. 30.

40. Raised up] The resurrection note is sounded clearly once more (i. 3, 22; ii. 24, 32; iii. 15; iv. 10), and again strongly emphasized.

Manifest] An adjective used again only in Rom. x. 20. He was made clearly 'manifest' by visible appearances as the very same person who had suffered and died. His identity was thus placed beyond all manner of doubt (cf. i. 3).

41. That were chosen before] This compound verb, with the prefix 'before', is found only here in the New Testament. The simpler verb, without that prefix, occurs in xiv. 23. It denoted, originally, 'to stretch out the hand' in order to record a vote, but came, later, to mean simply 'to appoint'. These witnesses were 'appointed' by God (John xvii. 6), and that 'beforehand', at the time of their first call to Christ's service, in order to testify to the great facts which they were to see and know, His death and resurrection.

from the dead. And he charged us to preach unto 42 the people, and to testify that this is he which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through 43 his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

Who did eat and drink with Him] See i. 4, note; also Luke xxiv. 30, 41-3; John xxi. 12-15.

42. Charged] See i. 4, note.

Preach] See viii. 5, note (proclaimed).

Testify] See ii. 40, note, and viii. 25.

Ordained of God to be the Judge] We have, here, the first definite mention in the Acts of the judgment to come (cf. xvii. 31; xxiv. 25). It is remarkable that all the references to it occur in preaching to Gentiles. Christ is appointed Judge by virtue of His true humanity (John v. 21-9); and His resurrection from the dead was the pledge and proof of His authority. The phrase 'quick (living) and dead' comprehends all mankind. This Christian doctrine of a personal resurrection and judgment contrasts strongly with the Hindu idea of a long cycle of transmigrations in which the law of 'karma' will slowly accomplish its inevitable consequences till re-absorption in an impersonal deity ensues.

43. All the prophets] See iii. 24, note. Cf. Isa. xlv. 22; xlix. 6; liii. 6; Joel ii. 28; Zech. ix. 10; etc.

Every one that believeth] Whether Jew or Gentile (ii. 21; Rom. x. 11-12). The phrase in the original is emphatic from position. By this declaration St. Peter opened the doors of Christ's kingdom to the Gentiles, in a very real sense. We must not omit to notice that faith in Christ was the indispensable condition, even in a case like that of Cornelius, for the forgiveness of sins (cf. iv. 12).

Remission of sins] See ii. 38, note.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost
 45 fell on all them which heard the word. And they of
 the circumcision which believed were amazed, as many
 as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also
 46 was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they
 heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

44. Fell on] See viii. 16, note. It was, so to speak, *the Pentecost of the Gentiles*, God's sign from heaven that they, equally with Jewish believers, were admitted to the highest privileges of His kingdom. It is all the more remarkable from the fact that they had not, as yet, professed their faith in baptism (ii. 38). Sovereign grace cannot be confined to what we may regard as ordinary channels. Here was proof positive, too, that the Gentiles could no longer be considered 'common and unclean' (v. 14-15).

All them which heard the word] We may take it for granted that the necessary degree of faith and receptivity was there (xv. 8-9).

45. They of the circumcision] Cf. xi. 2; Rom. iv. 12; Gal. ii. 12; Col. iv. 11; Titus i. 10. The phrase sometimes denotes Hebrew Christians, and sometimes that party among them who regarded circumcision as of vital importance.

Here it would seem to indicate the six companions who had come with Peter from Joppa (v. 23). Their Jewish prejudices broke down before this clear evidence of God's will and purpose.

Were amazed] See ii. 7, 12; viii. 9, 11, 13; ix. 21, for the same verb. Nothing could have been more astonishing to Jewish minds.

Was poured out] See ii. 17-18, 33, where the same verb is used in the active voice.

The gift] See ii. 38, note, and viii. 20. The gift was identical with that of Pentecost, and the manner of its bestowal similar.

Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, 47 that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded 48 them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

46. Speak with tongues] See ii. 4, note. The phenomena were, in the main, identical with those of the day of Pentecost, though, under the altered circumstances, there were differences of mode. In Cornelius's house there was no cosmopolitan assembly to hear them speak 'every one in his own language,' (ii. 8).

Magnify God] Cf. ii. 11. Ecstatic praise of God appears to have been the prominent feature on this occasion.

47. Can any man forbid the water] The words were a challenge, it would seem, to the Jewish Christians who accompanied him. Since God had accepted these Gentile believers and given them, beyond question, the 'inward and spiritual grace,' it were surely impossible to deny them the 'outward and visible sign' of water baptism, and so to refuse them admission to Christ's visible Church. To do so would be to 'make common what God had cleansed' (v. 15). We note, too, that the highest spiritual gifts do not justify us in dispensing with rites ordained by Christ Himself.

As well as we] The great lesson of the chapter, again and again emphasized, is the perfect equality of Jew and Gentile in the Gospel dispensation. No considerations of national or social distinctions must be allowed to mar the perfect fraternity of all believers. Neither may we despise or un-church any one in whom the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are manifestly displayed.

48. Commanded them to be baptized] The rite of baptism seems to have been administered by someone other than the apostle. Possibly his six companions officiated, or some other Christian or Christians present.

In the name of Jesus Christ] See ii. 38, note.

1 Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles also had received the

To tarry] This involved a further proof of his brotherly love for the Gentiles. He stayed with them, lived with them, ate with them. Christians who will not freely associate or eat together, on account of racial or caste considerations, have not yet laid to heart the lesson of this chapter.

Peter's prolonged stay was also, doubtless, utilized to instruct these new converts further in the truths of the Gospels.

Certain days] See ix. 19, note, for the same expression.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER X

1. *Principal divisions.*

(1) Preparation. vv. 1-23.

(a) Cornelius prepared. vv. 1-8.

(b) Peter prepared. vv. 9-23.

(2) Expectation. vv. 24-33.

(3) Manifestation. vv. 34-38 (of the Spirit's power).

2. *Prominent topics.*

(1) God's preparation of the convert. vv. 1-8.

(a) Providential circumstances. v. 1 (Cornelius stationed at Caesarea, within reach of Jewish and Christian teachers).

(b) Sincere convictions. v. 2 (living up to his light).

(c) Earnest petitions. vv. 2, 30 (seeking further light).

(d) Special directions. vv. 3-6 (clear, personal, specific. God guides the seeking soul).

(e) Obedient actions. vv. 7-8 (send, and he sent; send men, and he sent three men).

(2) God's preparation of the missionary. vv. 9-23.

(a) Prepared at the right time. v. 9 (as they, Gentiles, drew nigh to the city).

(b) Waiting in the right place. v. 9 (the place of prayer, on his knees, v. 13).

(c) Found in the right condition. v. 10 ('Hungry'. Cf. John iv. 6-7).

word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and 3

- (d) Instructed by the right method. vv. 11-16 (the 'vessel', in all its details, corresponding with the truth to be inculcated).
 - (e) Guided by the right circumstances. vv. 17-20 (Events at once occurring to explain the vision).
 - (f) Yielding the right response. vv. 21-3. (Obedient to the call. 'Get thee down'—and 'Peter went down'; 'Go with them',—and he 'went forth with them').
- (3) A typical inquirers' Meeting. vv. 24-33 (44). They were found in the right attitude for blessing.
- (a) Their earnest desire. vv. 24, 27 (Waiting; many come together).
 - (b) Their complete unity. v. 33. (We are all here).
 - (c) Their eager expectation. v. 33. (In the sight of God, to hear).
 - (d) Their genuine faith. v. 33 ('To hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord. Faith Godwards).
 - (e) Their ready receptivity. v. 44 (Received gladly both Gospel message and gift of Holy Spirit).
- Given these conditions fulfilled, no wonder that power and blessing were outpoured.
- (4) A typical 'instruction to inquirers' vv. 34-43.
- The apostle presented Christ to them, explaining the main facts of the Gospel.
- (a) Christ, the Benefactor. vv. 36-8. His life and ministry of mercy.
 - (b) Christ, the Redeemer. v. 30. His death and passion.
 - (c) Christ, the risen Lord. vv. 40-2. His resurrection and authority.
 - (d) Christ, the Judge of men. v. 42. His advent and judgment.
 - (e) Christ, the Saviour. v. 43. His grace and pardon.

4 didst eat with them. But Peter began, and expounded
5 *the matter* unto them in order, saying, I was in the
city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision,

CHAPTER XI

1-18. CRITICISMS BY THE CIRCUMCISION PARTY.

PETER'S SPEECH

So strong was the spirit of Jewish conservatism in the Church of Jerusalem that even St. Peter became the object of a storm of adverse criticism.

What had happened in the house of Cornelius did violence to all the national prejudices and cherished beliefs of the Hebrew race. The battle of Gentile liberty had to be fought strenuously, and the ground was contested step by step.

1. **The apostles and the brethren]** That is, 'the apostles and the other members of the Church'. As yet, there was no body of presbyters or elders (xv. 2, 4, 6, 22).

In Judaea] More correctly, 'throughout Judaea'. The Bezan text has it that Peter gave a long farewell address at Caesarea, and then itinerated through the country places *en route* for Jerusalem.

2. **They that were of the circumcision]** See x. 45, note. The exclusive party among the Hebrew Christians are intended here. Recent events in Samaria and Caesarea had probably helped to consolidate them as a party. Though they were Christians, they regarded circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic law as of the utmost importance. It was in some respects as though a body of converts in India were to graft on to their profession of Christianity an observance of many of their former caste customs, and wished to insist upon caste distinctions within the church.

Contended with him] The verb is the one rendered 'doubting' in x. 20. It suggests doubt and division, as well as contention. The imperfect tense speaks of repeated and prolonged disputing.

a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: upon the which when I had fastened 6 mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the heaven. And I heard also a voice saying 7 unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But I said, Not 8 so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. But a voice answered the 9 second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: 10

Didst eat with them] That was the real offence in the eyes of those orthodox Jews (see x. 14, note). It was the height of pollution in their eyes to take food with the 'unclean' Gentiles; just as it is considered defiling to the strict Hindu to eat with men of another race or a (so-called) 'lower caste'. Thus great ethical and spiritual questions, such as the real character of purity and the brotherhood of mankind, are obscured for the sake of observing the petty rules of a mechanical system.

4. Expounded in order] Both the verb (vii. 21; xviii. 26; xxviii. 23) and the adverb (Luke i. 3; Acts iii. 24; xviii. 23) are exclusively Lukan. The verb 'begin' is also frequent in his vocabulary (i. 1, note). The best way to remove misunderstanding is to make a simple statement of facts.

5. It came even unto me] A graphic detail, not mentioned in the narrative of ch. x. It lends additional force to the fact that the vision was a personal revelation of God's will to Peter, and that he had no option but to obey the leading.

6. When I had fastened my eyes] See i. 10, note. This is also an additional detail, and shews how carefully the apostle had attended to the vision (cf. x. 4.) The same remark is true of the verb which follows, 'I was considering'.

Wild beasts] Not specially mentioned in x. 12.

11 and all were drawn up again into heaven. And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Cæsarea unto
 12 me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accom-
 13 panied me; and we entered into the man's house: and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon,
 14 whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy
 15 house. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell

10. Drawn up] A Lukan verb, occurring again only in Luke xiv. 5. It is more vivid in meaning than the one used in x. 16, and shews how rapidly the vessel was caught up into heaven.

12. Making no distinction] See x. 20, where the same verb occurs (doubting), but in the passive voice. Cf. xv. 9. Here, then, were the apostle's marching orders, 'Go, making no distinctions'. The same command binds Christians in all ages. We are thus positively forbidden by the Holy Spirit to 'make distinctions' in the Gospel, whether they be national, racial, or caste distinctions.

These six brethren] See x. 23, 45. Their number is mentioned here for the first time. It was, therefore, a band of seven which set out on this special mission.

14. Words, whereby thou shalt be saved] This shews that, though Cornelius was sincerely pious and an earnest seeker after truth, a personal knowledge of Christ was necessary in order to actual salvation. It also suggests that his prayers and desires took the form of a deep spiritual longing for the salvation of God.

15. As I began to speak] It would appear, therefore, that St. Peter's sermon to the inquirers, clear though it was, was an unfinished sermon, and that he had intended to say more.

on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I 16 remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized ¹ with the Holy Ghost. If then 17 God gave unto them the like gift as *he did* ^{1 Or, in.} also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God? And 18 when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

Even as on us] Cf. x. 47, note. Since, then, God had made no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the bestowal of His supreme gift, it were criminal on the part of the Church to endeavour to perpetuate such distinctions.

At the beginning] That is, 'on the day of Pentecost'.

16. I remembered the word of the Lord] The word, that is, spoken just before His ascension (i. 5). Cf. John xiv. 26. For similar instances of recollection occasioned by the event, see Luke xxii. 61; xxiv. 8; John ii. 22; xii. 16.

17. The like gift] Cf. v. 15. For 'gift', see ii. 38, note. Peter emphasizes and reiterates again and again the fact that there is 'no distinction' in God's treatment of the Gentiles.

When we believed] The point emphasized is that is it *faith*, not circumcision, which qualifies men for spiritual gifts (cf. xv. 9; Gal. iii. 14). The participle rendered 'when (we) believed,' refers alike to 'them' and to 'us'. It was when the Gentiles believed, just as it was when the Jews believed, that the Spirit was conferred alike upon both. Whether Indian, Eurasian, or European, we all alike stand upon one common platform of faith, in order to receive God's gifts of grace.

18. They held their peace] They desisted, i.e. from their opposition (cf. Luke xiv. 4; Acts xxi. 14). The battle of Gentile liberty was, however, far from being finally won (see chapter xv). The verb of the text is Paulo-Lukan.

19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the
 tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far
 as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the
 20 word to none save only to Jews. But there were some

To the Gentiles also] As well as to believing Jews. We have here a sort of 'magna charta' of Gentile liberty. The doors of the kingdom of heaven are thrown wide open to all believers, without distinction of race or caste. We shall do well to apply the words to modern conditions in India. 'To the Brahmans also; to the Panchamas also; to the Chatriyas also; to the Vaisyas also, to the Sudras also; the door stands open, and there is no difference.

Repentance] See ii. 38, note. It is a 'change of mind', a turning from sin to Christ, which God looks for, and not a social or ceremonial qualification.

Unto life] See ch. v. 20, note. The end and object set before us is spiritual and eternal life, life realized in communion with Christ; not a position of vantage resting upon natural privileges or mechanical rites and observances.

19-30. SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL TO ANTIOCH.

BARNABAS, PAUL, AND AGABUS

The history here returns to the starting-point of the Christian dispersion (viii. 1, 4), and follows a fresh line of evangelization, as being the main line of future missionary operations.

19. Travelled] Or 'itinerated' (the same verb as in viii. 4, went about).

Phœnicia] A country on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, bounded roughly by Mt. Carmel on the south and the river Orontes on the north. It contained the important cities of Tyre and Sidon. Coasting vessels from Caesarea would readily convey these evangelists to the ports of Phœnicia. We find churches, some years later, at Tyre and Sidon (xxi. 4; xxvii. 3).

Cyprus] See iv. 36, note. Communication with Cyprus by sea from Tyre and Sidon was easy.

of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the ¹ Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them :

¹ Many ancient authorities read *Grecian Jews*.

21

Antioch] The capital of the Roman province of Syria, and the residence of the prefect. It was built by Seleucus Nicator about 300 B.C. and named after his father Antiochus. It was situated about sixteen miles from the sea, at the spot where the river Orontes flows through the mountains. Its port was Seleucia (xiii. 4). After Rome and Alexandria, it took rank as the third city in the empire. It contained a large Syrian population, with a considerable number of Jews also. But its civilization and culture were Greek, and its official and political tone Roman. It was thus a sort of cosmopolitan centre, and well adapted to become the centre of a missionary Church. By continuing their coasting voyage northward, these pioneer evangelists would arrive at Antioch. We shall remember that Nicolas, one of the Seven, hailed from this city (vi. 5).

Only to Jews] We see how deep-seated was the conviction that salvation was exclusively for the Jews, and how reluctant Hebrew Christians were to extend it to others.

20. Men of Cyprus and Cyrene] See ii. 10; iv. 36, notes. Cyprus early produced Christians like Barnabas and Mnason (xxi. 16). Men from such countries, where they had constant association in business, etc. with Gentiles, would be more cosmopolitan in thought and feeling than the more conservative Christians of Palestine. Symeon, Niger, and Lucius were, almost certainly, of the party (xiii. 1).

The Greeks also] Many ancient authorities read for 'Greeks', (see margin), 'Grecian Jews' (vi. 1, note). Internal evidence however, is strongly in favour of the reading of the text, since there would have been nothing novel in preaching to Hellenistic Jews, many of whom had been already admitted to the Church. It seems probable, however, that the word 'Greeks' refers here not so much to the 'outside' pagan population as to those who, though not circumcised proselytes, were yet, in varying degrees,

and a great number that believed turned unto the
 22 Lord. And the report concerning them came to the
 ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and
 23 they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: who,

in touch with the Jewish synagogues, as worshippers of the one true God (see x. 2, note). It was a new departure on the part of these preachers to evangelize uncircumcised 'Greeks', for, even if this event did not precede Peter's work in Caesarea (as it almost certainly did), we may reasonably suppose that these evangelists had not heard of the admission of the Gentiles there. The further step of actually conveying the Gospel to the purely heathen populations of the empire was reserved for St. Paul and his companions.

21. The hand of the Lord was with them] Cf. Luke i. 66; Acts iv. 30. It means that the power of the Lord was with them and that His blessing accompanied their labours. Possibly, the divine sanction of miracles was also vouchsafed. At any rate, a large ingathering took place. We notice, all through the Acts, how manifestly God's blessing rested on every new effort for a wider extension of the Gospel.

We may, similarly, expect His favour to accompany every sincere endeavour on the part of Indian Christians to carry the Gospel to un-evangelized districts.

22. The report concerning them] This may refer either to the adventurous preachers, or to the newly converted Greeks, or to both. It would raise both doubts and questions in the minds of the circumcision party, and would bring new problems for the Church to solve.

Sent forth Barnabas] As their delegate, to investigate the new position, to prevent irregularities, and to report. As the work spread, such delegates were necessary in order to keep the Church at head-quarters in touch with new departures and to promote unity and organization (cf. viii. 14; etc).

Barnabas was probably chosen as well for his high repute and catholic sympathies (iv. 36) as for the fact that he was a Cypriot like some of the evangelists whose work he was sent to examine.

when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, ¹that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: for he was a good

¹ Some ancient authorities read that they would cleave unto the purpose of their heart in the Lord.

24

23. Had seen the grace of God] That 'grace' was seen alike in the marvellous progress of the Gospel in Antioch and in the faith and zeal and consistent lives of the new converts. It was also manifest as 'surprising mercy' extended to those who were outside the pale of circumcision (see xiii. 43, note). We only learn adequately to appreciate God's 'grace' when we see men of every race and class gathered into one Body in Christ.

Was glad] A characteristic Lukan note (Introd. VI. 9). Our hearts ought to fill with joy when we see men of alien lands and races sharing in the blessings of the Gospel.

Exhorted them all] And that constantly (imperfect tense). The verb 'exhort' is cognate with the noun 'exhortation' (margin, consolation) of iv. 36 (see note there). Barnabas here proves himself worthy of his name 'Son of exhortation'. The verb connotes encouragement as well as advice. The word 'all' (Jews and Gentiles) suggests that he threw his influence entirely into the scale of unity.

Cleave unto the Lord] Or, more simply, 'continue with (or in) the Lord'. See xiii. 43, where the same verb is used in a similar phrase. The marginal reading, also, should be noticed. *Conversion* must be followed by *continuance*, and continuance depends on constant union and communion with the Lord Jesus. For this, 'purpose of heart' is needed, the humble but earnest determination to persist in the Christian life. No missionary in India to-day could give more wholesome or suitable advice to new converts than that given by Barnabas at Antioch. Notice, too, that he bids them cleave 'to the Lord' and not merely to Christianity. Every worker in the Mission Field knows how fatally easy it is for unstable converts to backslide, surrounded, as they are, by adverse and pernicious influences.

man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and
 25 much people was added unto the Lord. And he went
 26 forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul: and when he had found
 him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to
 pass, that even for a whole year they were
 gathered together ^{1 Gr. in.} with the church, and
 taught much people; and that the disciples were called
 Christians first in Antioch.

24. Full of the Holy Ghost] See vi. 5.

Much people was added unto the Lord] As the result of Barnabas's wise and sympathetic action. Again, it is the personal relationship to Christ which is insisted on. Notice the reiteration of 'the Lord' in this passage (vv. 20, 21, 24). As 'Lord of all', Jew and Gentile (x. 36), He claimed and received the allegiance of many Greeks at Antioch.

To Tarsus] See ix. 11, note. It had, apparently, been Saul's head-quarters for the last five or six years (ix. 30).

To seek for Saul] He had already evinced special friendship for him (ix. 27, note). He had learned, most likely, during their intercourse in Jerusalem, something of Saul's special call to be the apostle of the Gentiles (ix. 15), and had noted in him peculiar adaptability for just such work as lay to hand in Antioch. We see, moreover, behind and beyond Barnabas's action, God's special providence bringing the future foreign missionary into contact with the future missionary Church. Saul was the man for the occasion (Introd. V. 1). The verb rendered 'seek for' implies thorough search. It is peculiarly Lukan, being only used again in Luke ii. 44-5 of the search by His parents for the child Jesus. We know that Saul was busily occupied during this period in evangelistic work in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21), so that Barnabas may have had some difficulty in finding him./

26. When he had found him] The Bezan text implies that there was some reluctance on Saul's part in accepting the invitation, 'And when he (Barnabas) met with him, he exhorted

Now in these days there came down prophets from 27
Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of 28

him to come to Antioch; and they, when they were come, were gathered together with the church'. This may, however, be a later explanatory addition.

Were gathered together with the church] For 'church', see ch. v. 11, note. The Greek is better expressed by the margin, 'they were gathered together in the church'; i.e. 'they met together, in ministerial association and co-operation, in the Christian congregation, with other fellow-workers also (xiii. 1)'. It speaks of regular assemblies, systematic co-operation, and continual instruction. Others, however, interpret, 'They were hospitably received by the church'.

Much people] Reiterated stress is laid on the abnormal growth of the Church in Antioch (vv. 21, 24, 26).

The disciples] See vi. 1, and *Intro.* VI. 5. The name had naturally been continued from the Gospels, and marked them out as followers of the great Prophet and Guru, Jesus Christ. Cf. the Indian word 'Sikhs', i.e. disciples or followers of the Guru, Nanak.

Were called] A verb originally meaning 'to transact business'; then 'to take your name from some public business'; and so, finally, 'to receive a name' 'to be called'. It was their public character as witnesses of Christ, most likely, which suggested this new appellation at Antioch.

Christians] The name was, most probably, given to them by the heathen population of Antioch,—perhaps in a spirit half of jest, half of contempt. To the pagans of the city, they stood forth to view as 'those connected with Christ', a new sect or cult having Him for their acknowledged Head. We may compare such terms as Herodians, Pompeians, etc. The preponderance of Greek converts in the Church of Antioch may have had something to do with the invention of a new name for a Body who could hardly be looked on, with so large a Gentile element in it, as any longer a Jewish sect.

them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all ^{1 Gr. the in-} ^{habited earth.} ¹ the world: which came to pass in the days

The word is only employed again, in the New Testament, in xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16, where also most commentators detect a tone of reproach or contempt. Whatever its origin may have been, the new title was destined to supersede all others as time went on; and it was fitting that the term which is now world-wide in its application should first have come into vogue in Antioch, the centre of the new missionary movement. Let us Christians of India see to it that we do not drag our name in the dust, but live lives consistent with our profession. Let us show that we belong to Christ and are like Him.

27. In these days] That is, the days of the combined work of Barnabas and Saul at Antioch (v. 26).

Prophets] This is, the first mention of Christian 'prophets'. The title is given to Barnabas and others in xiii. 1. Cf. also xv. 32; xxi. 10; 1 Cor. xii. 28-9; xiv. 32, 37; Eph. ii. 20; iii. 5; iv. 11; and see notes on ii. 4, 17, 18. The word means 'an interpreter, of God's message', chiefly by forth-telling, but sometimes also by fore-telling, though the latter sense is subsidiary. The special function of the prophet was that of exhortation, instruction, and edification by means of the declaration of God's message to His people. In Eph. iv. 11, prophets are ranked next to apostles in the orders of the ministry. In the case of Agabus, of course, definite predictions were uttered, but these were rather the abnormal than the normal characteristic of a Christian prophet's office.

From Jerusalem] Possibly attracted by the fame of the new mission at Antioch.

28. Agabus] We read of him again in xxi. 10-11, but know nothing further of him than what is recorded in these two passages.

Signified] Possibly with some manifest 'sign' (cf. xxi. 11; Jer. xiii. 3-8; Ezek. vi. 11; xii. 3-5; etc.). His prediction was 'by the Spirit' (i. 2, note).

of Claudius. And the disciples, every man according to **29**
 his ability, determined to send relief unto the
 brethren that dwelt in Judæa: which also ^{1 Gr. for}
 they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of ^{ministry.} **30**
 Barnabas and Saul.

A great famine over all the world] That is, 'over all the civilized (or Roman) world' (see margin). We have evidence from Suetonius, Dion Cassius, Tacitus, and Eusebius to the effect that, in the reign of Claudius Caesar, there was famine in various parts of the empire (Italy, Greece, etc.). As regards Palestine, the harvest seems to have failed largely in A. D. 45, and entirely in A. D. 46, with the result that, in the latter year, a severe famine set in. Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 2. 5; xx. 5. 2) describes its severity and mentions the fact that Queen Helena (mother of Izates, king of Adiabene in Syria), who went to Jerusalem as a royal proselyte in A. D. 45, was there through the famine and distributed corn and figs which she imported for the purpose from Egypt and Cyprus.

Claudius] Emperor of Rome A. D. 41-54. Cf. xviii. 2.

29. Every man according to his ability] More literally, 'as each one prospered' (or, had the means). The verb is peculiar to this verse.

To send relief] The Greek reads literally, as the margin shows, 'to send for ministry', the noun being the same as in vi. 1 (ministration). It clearly means, here, 'to send relief in the shape of contributions (probably of corn).' We may reasonably suppose that some time elapsed in the raising of such contributions, extending beyond the year mentioned in v. 26.

30. Which also they did] That is, after the famine actually broke out; and, therefore, later than the persecution of Herod described in chapter xii.

The elders] Here we have the first mention of those 'elders' or 'presbyters' who, henceforth, figure so largely in the New Testament. It is characteristic of St. Luke to introduce them suddenly, without comment (*Introd.* VI. 3). They are seen

1 Now about that time Herod the king put forth his
2 hands to afflict certain of the church. And he killed

to occupy an official position in the mother-church of Jerusalem, and to be, in some sense, co-adjutors of the apostles (xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23; xvi. 4; xxi. 18). We find them also as the chief ministers of the Gentile churches (xiv. 23; xx. 17, 28). Ramsay thinks, with reason, that they are mentioned in this verse as those responsible for the 'practical working' of the congregation, the apostles being no longer directly concerned with such matters as contributions (vi. 4). As the work spread, the apostles would be more and more occupied with itinerating tours and general spiritual supervision and organization, so that the local duties fell to the presbyters of each congregation.

Barnabas and Saul] As being the real leaders and most prominent ministers of the church at Antioch (xiii. 2). This is the first record of special collections in one congregation on behalf of another. St. Paul was most careful, in later years, to inculcate in the Gentile churches the spirit of gratitude and philanthropy, and so to bind them with the mother-church at Jerusalem (xxiv. 17; Gal. ii. 10; Rom. xv. 25-7; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4; 2 Cor. viii. 1-15). He learned by experience on this occasion the importance of such contributions for the promotion of brotherly love and Christian solidarity. It is for the spiritual welfare of infant churches that they cultivate, from the first, a spirit of Christian liberality and give generously of their means for the furtherance of the Gospel. /

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XI

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) The admission of the Gentiles vindicated. vv. 1-18.
- (2) The conversion of the Gentiles furthered. vv. 19-30.

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) A critical question. vv. 1-18. Caste or catholicity?
 - (a) A storm of criticism. vv. 1-3.
 - (b) A statement of facts. vv. 4-11 (Meet criticism with simple truth).
 - (c) A command of God. v. 12 (Go, making no distinction).
 - (d) A sign from heaven. vv. 13-16 (The Holy Ghost fell on them).

James the brother of John with the sword. And when 3

- (e) A question of moment. v. 17 (Who was I that I could withstand God?).
- (f) A decision of importance. v. 18 (Acquiescence in God's will to include the Gentiles).
- (2) A missionary Church. vv. 19-30. The Church at Antioch.
 - (a) Its cosmopolitan character. vv. 20-1.
 - (b) Its earnest zeal. vv. 22-3.
 - (c) Its constant growth. vv. 21, 24, 26.
 - (d) Its special equipment. vv. 25-6 (xiii. 1).
 - (e) Its progressive attitude v. 26 (New title. Called Christians first at Antioch).
 - (f) Its liberal spirit. vv. 27-30.

CHAPTER XII

1-19. HEROD'S PERSECUTION. MARTYRDOM OF JAMES. ESCAPE OF PETER

I. About that time] That is, about the time when Barnabas and Saul were actively ministering in Antioch (xi. 25-27). Herod's persecution and death took place in A.D. 44, prior to the Judæan famine. A period of special progress was now interrupted by persecution.

Herod the king] Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great and nephew of Herod Antipas (who put John the Baptist to death). The son of Aristobulus, he was born about 10 B.C. and was early sent to Rome where he was brought up. Through indiscreet words spoken in favour of his friend Caligula, he was cast into prison; but the turn of the tide of his fortune occurred on the death of the emperor Tiberius and the accession to the throne of Caligula. Through the royal favour, he received, with the title of king, the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias (Luke iii. 1), and a little later on, Galilee and Perea also. Claudius, in his turn, afterwards added Judæa and Samaria, so that Agrippa ruled finally, from A.D. 41, over all the territory which had formerly been under the sway of his grandfather.

he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And *those* were the days of unleavened bread. And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him

Put forth his hands] See iv. 3; v. 18; xxi. 27, where the same phrase occurs. Satan is ever ready to lay his hands on aggressive Christians.

2. James the brother of John] One of the chief apostles. (Mark v. 37; ix. 2; xiv. 33). We may be sure that he was active in his labours, though he has not been specially mentioned in the previous history of the Acts.

With the sword] A political mode of execution, considered disgraceful by the Jews. It reminds us of John the Baptist's death. The brevity of this account of the martyrdom of a chief apostle is remarkable, but quite in keeping with St. Luke's style. He only narrates in detail what makes for the wide spread of the Gospel. St. James was thus allowed to drink of his Master's bitter cup (Matt. xx. 20-28; Mark x. 35-45).

3. It pleased the Jews] Agrippa I is known to have adopted a policy of special conciliation towards the Jews, and to have posed as a devout adherent of their religion. His persecution of leading Christians in Jerusalem was, most likely, intended to promote his popularity with the Jewish authorities.

Peter also] As being the most conspicuous of the apostles, their spokesman and leader (ii. 14; iii. 12; iv. 8; v. 3, 8, 29).

4. The days of unleavened bread] Exod. xii. 14-20. A multitude would, therefore, be gathered at Jerusalem for the Passover, and there would be an additional reason for Herod's action at that time, in view of his desire for popularity. Like his Master, Peter was arrested at the paschal season.

In prison] This was, at least, St. Peter's third experience of the inside of a prison (iv. 3; v. 18).

Four quaternions] That is, four bands each consisting of four soldiers. The night was divided into four watches, after

forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in the prison : but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains : and guards before the

the manner of the Romans, and each of these bands was responsible for a three-hours' watch.

After the Passover] Meaning, here, after the expiration of the whole Feast of eight days. Agrippa seems to have affected a piety which avoided executions during such a sacred season.

To bring him forth] Literally 'to lead him up', as though to the tribunal, for public trial and judgment. Herod intended to gratify the Jews by a formal trial and execution.

5. Prayer] The word is emphatically placed in the Greek. This was the power which afflicted Christians could wield against their persecutors (see *Introd.* VI. 10).

Earnestly] An adverb occurring again only in 1 Pet. i. 22. The corresponding adjective is found in Luke xxii. 44 ; 1 Pet. iv. 8 ; and a cognate noun in chapter xxvi. 7. It is derived from a root meaning 'to stretch out', and denotes intentness and intensity, as though a man's whole being were 'on the stretch' with earnestness of desire. Our Lord's intensity of prayer in Gethsemane affords a unique example of its full meaning (Luke xxii. 44). By collating the passages in which it occurs, we see that Christians are to be characterized by

- (a) Intense love. (1 Pet. i. 22 ; iv. 8).
- (b) Intense prayer. (Luke xxii. 44 ; Acts xii. 5).
- (c) Intense service. (Acts xxvi. 7).

Of the church] See ch. v. 11, note. The gathering in Mary's house (v. 12) shows that united meetings for prayer were held ; and there was, doubtless, much prayer offered otherwise, both in public and private.

6. The same night] That is, 'the night before the proposed trial and execution'.

7 door kept the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.
8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

Was sleeping] Like his Master in the storm (Mark iv. 38), unperturbed by the near approach of danger. So Christ gives His people peace (John xiv. 27; Phil. iv. 6-7; 1 Pet. v. 7; (Ps. cxxvii. 2).

Between two soldiers] Two of the quaternion (v. 4) keeping watch would act as guards inside, chained to the prisoner; while the other two would stand as sentinels without the door.

With two chains] Each of which bound him to one of his guards. We notice the stress laid on the precautions used to secure the prisoner (vv. 4, 5, 6, 10); but neither prison, chains, soldier-guards, nor doors could hold the apostle against God's will.

7. **An angel of the Lord]** See ch. v. 19, note.

Stood by him] A favourite verb with St. Luke, and peculiar to him and St. Paul. We may compare its use in Luke ii. 9; Acts xxiii. 11.

A light] A supernatural light of celestial glory.

Smote . . . on the side] We see how soundly and peacefully the apostle was sleeping. It required real effort on the angel's part to wake him. The same verb is used again in v. 23; but how different was this 'smiting' of gracious help from that 'smiting' of awful judgment.

Rise up] See ix. 6, note.

8. **Gird thyself]** A simple verb found again only in John xxi. 16. The long tunic or under-garment was left loose by

And he went out, and followed; and he wist not that ⁹ it was true which was done ¹ by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. And when ^{1 Or through.} ¹⁰ they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come ¹¹ to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of night, but required to be bound up by day for active movement.

Cast thy garment about thee] That is, the outer garment or cloak, which had been laid aside in the prison. We mark the precision of the angel's directions; nothing was left undone (cf. ch. v. 23, note).

9. Thought he saw a vision] 'He continued thinking' (imperfect tense). For 'vision' see vii. 31, note.

10. The first and the second ward] This may refer to the two warders (who, with the two guards inside, formed the quaternion on watch), considered as posted outside the cell in different positions, the one close to the cell door and the other farther away. Or, it may indicate two different stations in the prison precincts, the one near Peter's cell, with the two outside guards of the quaternion standing, and the other some other part of the gaol where quite other sentinels may have been posted.

The iron gate, etc.] That is, the strong massive outside gate, which barred egress from the gaol enclosure into the city beyond. When God leads the way, the stoutest obstacles remove (Isa. xlv. 1, 2; Mic. ii. 13).

They went out] The Bezan text adds graphically, and with an air of truthfulness, 'and descended the seven steps' which led down from the prison gate into the roadway.

the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the 12 people of the Jews. And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered 13 together and were praying. And when he knocked

11. Hath sent forth] Except for its use by St. Paul in Gal. iv. 4, 6, this compound verb is exclusively Lukan. It occurs again in Acts in vii. 12; ix. 30; xi. 22; xiii. 26; xvii. 14; xxii. 21.

Delivered me] The verb is used in vii. 34 of the deliverance from Egypt. Here St. Peter experiences a new Passover, and that at the close of the paschal Feast.

Expectation] An exclusively Lukan noun, only found again in Luke xxi. 26. Doubtless, the multitude of Jews gathered for the Passover had eagerly anticipated the drama which was to have been enacted on the morrow.

12. When he had considered, etc.] Better, 'when he had comprehended (the matter)', perceived what it really meant (cf. xiv. 6). Another Paulo-Lukan verb.

Mary] We do not read of her elsewhere. As Mark is called Barnabas's cousin in Col. iv. 10, she must have been aunt to the latter, either by birth or marriage. Her husband is not mentioned, and so she may have been a widow. She was, evidently, the owner of a house of considerable size and in somewhat affluent circumstances. This fact throws light on the question of a community of goods (ii. 45; iv. 34-5, notes).

John, whose surname was Mark] 'John' was his Hebrew name; 'Mark' his Gentile one (i. 23, note). From the various notices of him which occur in the New Testament, we may form an epitome of his history.

(a) As mentioned above, he was cousin of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10); i.e. they were children either of two brothers, or two sisters, or of a brother and sister.

(b) He was connected with Peter in his youth, and received spiritual help from him (Acts xii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 13).

at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened 14 not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou 15

- (c) He accompanied Barnabas and Paul to Antioch (v. 25), and, later, to Cyprus (xiii. 4-5). He deserted them, however, at Perga (xiii. 13), and for this reason Paul refused to take him as a fellow-worker during his second missionary journey, with the result that Mark accompanied Barnabas to Cyprus (xv. 36-9).
- (d) We then lose sight of him till he re-appears with Paul at Rome, evidently a more consecrated man than formerly and the apostle's accepted companion and co-worker (Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24). During St. Paul's second imprisonment at Rome, we find the apostle bidding Timothy to come speedily and bring Mark with him (2 Tim. iv. 11), as being 'useful for ministering'.
- (e) 1 Pet. v. 13, shows him again associated with St. Peter and suggests that he had visited some of those churches of Asia Minor to which that apostle is writing. His co-partnership with Peter may have been during the period which elapsed between his departure with Barnabas to Cyprus and his re-appearance at Rome with Paul.
- (f) All that we know certainly, in addition, is that he was the writer of the second Gospel, in the composition of which he had, most probably, St. Peter's help and advice. Papias says that he wrote it as that apostle's interpreter.

Gathered together] A compound verb only used again in xix. 25. We may contrast *this* gathering for united prayer with *that* gathering for organized opposition. /

13. Gate] See x. 17, note. 'Gateway' or 'vestibule'.

A maid] That is, 'the portress' (cf. John xviii. 17), showing that Mary was fairly well-to-do, with domestic servants under her. Her name 'Rhoda' means 'a rose'.

art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was
 16 even so. And they said, It is his angel. But Peter
 continued knocking: and when they had opened, they
 17 saw him, and were amazed. But he, beckoning unto
 them with the hand to hold their peace,⁴ declared unto
 them how the Lord had brought him forth out of

14. For joy] Literally 'for the joy' (which she felt on recognizing Peter's voice). The same expression occurs again in Matt. xiii. 44; Luke xxiv. 41, both interesting parallels.

15. Thou art mad] A similar charge was levelled at St. Paul (xxvi. 24-5), and at our Lord Himself (John x. 20). The assembled company had more zeal than faith. They prayed 'intensely' (v. 5), but, when the answer to their prayer was vouchsafed, they charged the bearer of the good news with insanity. History often repeats itself.

Confidently affirmed] A compound verb only used again in Luke xxii. 59, a curious parallel, as there also it is an affirmation as to Peter's identity. The tense also is the same in both cases, 'persisted in confidently affirming'. †

His angel] According to beliefs current among the Jews of that age, every man has a guardian angel assigned to him who can assume, at will, the form of the man whom he protects. Cf. Matt. xviii. 10; Heb. i. 14. It is probably to such a belief that allusion is made here. Others have supposed the reference to be to Peter's disembodied spirit or 'ghost', but there seems to be no authority for such a usage of the word angel. †

16. Continued knocking] It was theirs, now, to cease praying and desist from doubting, and to rise and open the door.

Were amazed] The same verb as in ii. 7; viii. 9, 11, 13; ix. 21; x. 45. We are struck by their reluctance to believe that God would really answer their prayer. What they asked for seemed to be impossible.

17. Beckoning] A verb peculiar to the Acts (xiii. 16; xix. 33; xxi. 40). It denotes a shaking up and down of the hand to procure silence.

prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place. Now as soon as it was day, there was 18 no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and 19 found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should be ¹ put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and tarried there.

*1 Gr. led
away to
death.*

James] Our Lord's brother (i. 14, note). He stands forth to prominence here for the first time as a leader of the Church in Jerusalem. In chapter xv. 13-21, we see him as president of the Council held in that city to consider the position of the Gentile churches; and other notices of him in the New Testament confirm the fact that he held a position in some respects analogous to that of the later episcopate (Gal. i. 19; ii. 9, 12; Acts xxi. 18). He was, so to speak, head of the college of presbyters in Jerusalem. To him is to be ascribed the general Epistle of St. James. He is known as 'James the Just', and was martyred in Jerusalem in A. D. 62, being thrown down from a pinnacle of the temple and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.

Unto another place] We know not whither. The withdrawal was, apparently, only temporary, for in xv. 7-11, we find him back in Jerusalem again. St. Luke is not concerned with his further history, since he passes on to narrate the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, in which movement St. Paul is the leading figure.

No small stir] The same phrase occurs again in xix. 23, the noun being peculiar to these two passages. The soldiers knew their responsibility, and hence their perturbation.

19. Put to death] Literally 'led away' (to execution). Death, according to Roman custom, was the penalty for allowing a prisoner to escape (cf. xvi. 27; xxvii. 42).

20 Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country
21 was fed from the king's country. And upon a set

Caesarea] See viii. 40, note. It was, at this time, with the whole of Palestine, under Agrippa's jurisdiction. He tarried there in the palace built by his grandfather.

20-25. HEROD'S DEATH

20. Highly displeased] This compound verb is a forcible one, occurring only here in the New Testament, 'he was at desperate enmity with' them. As Phœnician cities, they formed part of the Roman province of Syria, and were not under Herod's jurisdiction.

Tyre] An ancient Phœnician town, about halfway between Sidon and Acre, built partly on the mainland and partly on an island which lay half a mile off the coast. Affording excellent shelter for shipping, it was the most famous port of the ancient world, the island containing two harbours well protected by breakwaters. Alexander the Great was occupied seven months in reducing it; and, after various vicissitudes, it passed into Roman hands.

Sidon] About twenty miles north of Tyre. A natural breakwater, in the shape of a rocky reef, rendered it a capital harbour. It rivalled Tyre as a centre of merchandise and, at times, surpassed it. Like Tyre, it fell to Alexander; and, later, to the Romans. Herod is known to have favoured Berytus (Beyrout), a maritime port twenty miles north of Sidon, and this may possibly have been the bone of contention between them.

With one accord] See i. 14, for the same word.

Blastus] The name appears to be Roman, and he may have been a Latin by race in the service of Herod. Similarly, we have European officials to-day in the service of Indian rājās.

day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the ¹ throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, *saying*, ^{1 Or, judgment-seat.}

22

They 'persuaded' him, it would seem, by a bribe. We are only too familiar in this country with incidents of this nature; and, for the good of the country, as well as in the interests of morality and religion, we ought to set our face against bribery and corruption of every kind.

Chamberlain] The word occurs only here, and denotes an official in charge of the king's bedchambers.

Their country was fed, etc.] The cities of Phoenicia depended largely on Galilee for their supply of corn (1 Kings v. 9-11; Ezra iii. 7). By cutting off these supplies, Herod had it in his power to put them to great straits.

21. Upon a set day] Josephus (Antiq. xix. 8, 2) tells us that a special festival was appointed to give thanks for the emperor's safety—perhaps on the return of Claudius from Britain—and that the fatal malady overtook Herod on the second day of the festival. This was, we may well believe, the day fixed also for an audience with the Phoenician petitioners.

In royal apparel] According to Josephus, it was 'a garment wholly of silver and of a contexture truly wonderful.'

Sat on the throne] According to the Jewish historian, the spectacle took place in the theatre. The 'throne' in question (margin, judgment seat) would be the royal dais fixed in the theatre for the king to preside in state over the proceedings.

Made an oration] The verb so translated occurs only here. It signifies 'to make a speech in a public assembly of the people'. Josephus does not mention an oration, but he is not concerned with the episode of the Tyre-Sidon delegates.

22. The people shouted] The word 'people' (demos) indicates the assembled populace, the crowd who attended the spectacle. It is a well-known classical word, but is peculiar to the Acts in the New Testament (xvii. 5; xix. 30, 38). Josephus's account reads as follows, 'At which time (early morning) the silver of

- 23** The voice of a God, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.
- 24** But the word of God grew and multiplied.

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 that he was a god. Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery'.

23. An angel of the Lord] See ch. v. 19, note, and cf. xii. 7.

Smote him] See v. 7, note. Josephus has it, 'A severe pain arose 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 by death"'. He goes on to tell us that Agrippa was carried away from the amphitheatre to the palace in violent pain, and died in five days worn out by the agony.

He was eaten of worms] Cf. the account of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes in 2 Maccabees ix. 5-9. The verb so translated occurs only here in the New Testament. It suggests the medical knowledge of the writer. Death by so loathsome a malady was a fit punishment for Agrippa's overweening pride; and Josephus's description tallies with St. Luke's closely enough for all practical purposes. We could hardly expect the Jewish historian, as an admirer of the Roman-Herodian system, to say more than he has done about the revolting nature of Agrippa's illness.

Gave up the ghost] See ch. v. 5, note. After his death, Palestine passed directly into Roman hands again.

24. But the word of God grew] Cf. vi. 1, 7; ix. 31; xix. 20. Each new wave of opposition served only to propagate the Gospel further. The imperfect tense of the verbs speaks of continual progress, 'kept growing and multiplying'.

And Barnabas and Saul returned ¹ from Jerusalem, 26 when they had fulfilled their ministrations, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

¹ Many ancient authorities read to Jerusalem.

25. Barnabas and Saul] See xi. 30. Their mission to Judaea with contributions from Antioch must be regarded as following Herod's death after an interval of time. He died A. D. 44, whereas the famine did not actually prevail till A. D. 46. Barnabas and Saul probably went to Judaea in the autumn of that year and spent a few months in the work of famine distribution, returning to Antioch early in A. D. 47.

Returned from Jerusalem] As though 'to Antioch'. As the margin shews, however, many ancient authorities read 'returned to Jerusalem'. It is then explained as meaning, 'They returned to (head-quarters in) Jerusalem (from their work in the outlying stations of Tarsus, Antioch, etc.), and fulfilled their ministry (of relief) there; and (afterwards) they took with them (to Antioch) John whose surname is Mark'. We may, again, regard the words as implying, since their mission of relief was not to Jerusalem only but to all Judaea (xi. 29), that they performed their errand in the outlying churches of Judaea and then 'returned to Jerusalem', from which they finally set out for Antioch again. It is interesting to us in India to see these early missionaries busying themselves with famine relief, and taking supplies of corn from place to place.

Ministrations] The word is the same as that rendered 'relief' in xi. 29, to which it clearly refers.

Taking with them] This compound verb is used again only in xv. 37-8; Gal. ii. 1. In ch. xv it refers again to Mark.

John whose surname was Mark] See v. 12, note.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XII

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) Strong opposition. vv. 1-6.
- (2) Signal deliverance. vv. 7-19.
- (3) Striking retribution. vv. 20-5.

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) God preserving His servant. vv. 1-17.
 (a) The hostility of the world. vv. 1-3.
 (b) The extremity of the situation. vv. 4, 5, etc. (prison, soldiers, chains, guards, iron-gates).
 (c) The intensity of the Church's prayer. vv. 5, 12.
 (d) The tranquillity of the believer's faith. v. 6 (sleeping).
 (e) The sufficiency of the Lord's help. vv. 7-17.
- (2) God punishing His enemy. vv. 18-24.
 (a) Herod's love of fame. vv. 1-3.
 (b) „ pride of office. vv. 19, 20.
 (c) „ greed of glory. v. 21.
 (d) „ crime of impiety. vv. 22-3 (gave not God the glory).
 (e) „ death of shame. v. 23.

While God delivered Peter at *the lowest point* of his extremity, He punished Herod at *the highest point* of his self-sufficiency (Luke i. 50-53).

Thoughts on Part II. (Chs. viii-xii)

1. Notice Satan's five great devices (as in Part I) and God's overruling grace.

<i>Satan's device.</i>	<i>God's providence.</i>
(1) Opposition. viii. 1-4.	viii. 4-8.
(2) Deception. viii. 9-24.	viii. 25-40.
(3) Persecution. ix. 1-2; 23-25; 29.	ix. 3-22; 28; 31-43
	Ch. x.
(4) Division. xi. 1-3.	xi. 18-30.
(5) Martyrdom. xii. 13; etc.	xii. 24.

Compare the remarks on the corresponding features, of Part I.

2. Notice the steady progress of the Gospel and the increase of the Church.

that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and

The Gospel has been preached in Samaria (viii. 5-25); to an Ethiopian stranger (viii. 27-39); in various cities from Azotus, northward (viii. 40); in Damascus and Jerusalem more fully (ix. 20-29); in Lydda, Sharon, and Joppa (ix. 32-43); to a Gentile company in Caesarea (ch. x.); in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (xi. 19-26); while the following passages shew the rapid increase of the Church (ix. 31, 35, 42; xi. 21, 24; xii. 24).

3. *Notice the difference between the beginning and end of this part of the history.*
 - (a) It begins with Saul the Jewish persecutor (viii. 1-3) and ends with Paul the Christian philanthropist (xii. 25).
 - (b) It begins with conservative Jerusalem (viii. 1) and ends with progressive Antioch (xii. 25).
 - (c) It begins with a dispersion from Jerusalem (viii. 1) and ends with contributions to Jerusalem (xi. 29, 30; xii. 25).

Part 3. Acts in other lands.—Chapters. 13—28

We come now to that part of the history which describes the gradual extension of the work throughout the Roman empire, and the formation of distinctly Gentile churches. In this work, St. Paul is the leading figure. It is, so to speak, the foreign missions' section of the Acts of the Apostles, looked at from the standpoint of the 'home country' of Palestine. The way for it had been specially prepared by the creation of a new centre of operations in Syrian Antioch.

1 First Missionary Journey and its outcome Chapter xlii. 1-xv. 39

As we shall see, the first operations of the great apostle of the Gentiles and his companions, on setting forth from Syrian Antioch, were conducted in the Roman provinces of Cyprus and Galatia. It is with these that the narrative of the first missionary journey is concerned. The chief result was the

2 Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul

foundation of churches at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. These churches were, it seems almost certain, what became afterwards known as 'the churches of Galatia' (Gal. i. 2). It is true that, according to the view which has been generally accepted in the past and which is known as 'the North Galatian theory',—the churches of Galatia were founded by St. Paul during his second missionary journey (xvi. 6), and represent congregations at Ancyra, Pessinus, Tavium, etc., in northern Galatia; but the following considerations seem fairly decisive against that view. ;

1. We read nothing in the Acts, or elsewhere in the New Testament, about churches at Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium, and should therefore not expect an Epistle to be addressed to them by St. Paul. Whereas it would be strange if, while he writes Epistles to the other churches the establishment of which is described in the Acts (Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus), he should address no epistolary message to the churches founded during his first missionary journey,—congregations in which, as we know, he continued to take the greatest possible interest (xv. 36). Both analogy and the co-ordination of the history of the Acts with the circumstances of the Epistles are in favour of what is known as 'the South Galatian theory', the view, that is, which maintains that Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, cities in the southern portion of the Galatian province, are 'the churches of Galatia'.

2. The North Galatian theory requires that St. Paul should have made a long detour to the north and east during his second missionary journey (xvi. 6, note), quite out of his natural route westward; whereas the other alternative sees him revisiting his former scenes of labour and pursuing a natural and direct path.

3. Close and striking connexion can be shewn between the contents of the Epistle to the Galatians and the circumstances of the congregations in South Galatia, and many parallels have been traced between the thoughts and phraseology of that Epistle and the apostle's speech at Pisidian Antioch.

for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, 3

We may add that, at the period in question, Pisidian Antioch; Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe were all included in the Roman province of Galatia. See also notes on xvi. 6; xviii. 23; xix. 1. St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, uses the simple noun 'Galatia' to denote the whole province; whereas St. Luke, the Greek, follows current Grecian usage and does not speak of the whole province as 'Galatia', but mentions its constituent parts, as they were popularly spoken of.

CHAPTER XIII

1-4. PAUL AND BARNABAS SENT FORTH FROM ANTIOCH

1. In the church that was (there)] The unusual form of expression seems to draw attention to the organized character of the congregation at Antioch (cf. xi. 26), and to suggest a new development there, as the starting-point for a fresh work.

Prophets] See xi. 27, note. *p. 260*

Teachers] While the word 'prophets' implies the declaration of God's message in exhortation and preaching, this one indicates the imparting clear instruction in the truths of the Gospel. Cf. ch. v. 42, note; Rom. xii. 7. We find, later, that such 'teachers' constituted a definite class of ministers (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11). Definite systematic teaching, as well as hortative preaching, is to be strongly encouraged in Indian congregations.

Barnabas] See iv. 36; xi. 22.

Symeon that was called Niger] 'Symeon' was his Hebrew name. 'Niger' is Latin, and represents his Gentile name (cf. i. 23; xii. 12). † It means black, and some have thought that it speaks of his swarthy complexion, as he was, possibly, from Cyrene in Africa (xi. 20).

Lucius of Cyrene] See xi. 20. Some regard him as identical with the 'Lucius' of Rom. xvi. 21, but it is, of course, only a conjecture.

when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch] The name is identical with the Hebrew 'Menahem'. Josephus tells us (Antiq. xv. 10. 5) that a famous Essene of that name predicted that Herod the Great, while he was but a boy, would one day be king, and that the grateful monarch afterwards favoured him and his sect. Some think that the Manaen of the text may have been that famous Essene's son. The word 'foster-brother' may signify that he was brought up with Herod the Great's son Antipas. There is evidence from inscriptions, however, that the word was used as an honourable court title, 'the king's friend', and so it may only indicate that Manaen was a favourite of Herod the tetrarch.

Saul] Last in the list, but destined to become the real leader in the new enterprise. We notice the cosmopolitan character of this company of ministers. They represented various countries, occupations, and positions in life, and so were fitted in a special way to apprehend and execute God's world-wide missionary purposes.

2. As they ministered] This verb occurs again in Rom. xv. 27; Heb. x. 11, passages which well illustrate its usage (1) of performing, generally, any office or function, and (2) of executing temple or ministerial service. The context is best satisfied by understanding the meaning to be 'as they were engaged in their ministerial duties', without attempting to narrow down those duties in any way.

Fasted] The only references to fasting in the Acts occur here, in the following verse, and in xiv. 23. We gather that they were giving themselves, in some special manner, to prayer and fasting. Possibly, they were seeking to know God's will as to further evangelistic developments.

The Holy Ghost said] We note His personality (cf. ch. v. 3, 9; viii. 29; x. 19), as also His practical direction of the Church's operations (Introd. vi. 1).

So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went 4 down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to

Separate me] That is, 'separate for (or, to) Me'. Cf. Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 15. God had already 'separated' them by His special call and grace. It remained for the Church to 'separate' them by an act of solemn dedication.

Barnabas and Saul] The first and last in the list of v. 1. They were the choicest, in many respects, of the Antiochian ministers (xi. 25-6, 30). And they had been specially used and blessed in what we may call the 'home ministry'. God would have the very best for foreign missionary work. We need to lay this fact to heart in our missionary enterprises in India. Let the Indian Church give her choicest sons for the evangelistic enterprise which lies before her, and let the English and American churches send out their best as fellow-helpers and workers.

3. Then] At a special gathering convened for the purpose. It was what we should call, in modern parlance, a 'dismissal or valedictory meeting'.

Fasted and prayed] See v. 2; vi. 6; viii. 15, notes. Doubtless, the whole congregation took part in this valedictory ceremony. The Bezan text reads 'fasted and prayed all (of them)'.

Laid their hands on them] See vi. 6, note. They were thus solemnly set apart by the Church of Antioch and its ministers for their special foreign missionary work.

] Sent them away] In modern missionary language, 'dismissed them'. It would be better, however, to translate literally, 'released them (from their duties at Antioch)', with the further idea involved that they 'bade them farewell'.

] 4. Being sent forth] While the Church released them and bade them farewell, it was the Holy Spirit Himself who authoritatively sent them forth (Intro. VI. 1). This compound verb only occurs again in xvii. 10.

Seleucia] The seaport of Antioch (xi. 20, note), sixteen miles distant. It was built by Seleucus Nicator, and called by his name. Lying at the mouth of the river Orontes, it was important both as a maritime fortress and as a commercial centre.

- 5 Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant.
- 6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain 1 Gr. *Magus*: as in Matt. ii. 1, 7, 16. sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name

Sailed] A compound verb peculiar to the Acts (xiv. 26; xx. 15; xxvii. 1). It must have been early in the sailing season (March), or the westerly winds which prevail there in the summer would have prevented their running straight across to Salamis.

Cyprus] See iv. 36, note. Barnabas had a special interest in that island, and Jews were numerous there.

5-12. CYPRUS. SERGIUS PAULUS AND ELYMAS

5. **Salamis]** See iv. 36, note. The largest and most important town in the island, though not the political capital. It had a good harbour, and lay in the direction of the Syrian coast, on the south-east coast of Cyprus.

In the synagogues] There must have been several of these in Salamis, as the Jewish population there was very large. It was St. Paul's constant custom to commence work in such Jewish places of worship, wherever they existed. For 'synagogue', see vi. 9.

John] See xii. 12, note.

As their attendant] The word is a general one for attendants and ministers of all kinds (cf. ch. v. 22, 26; xxvi. 16). Some understand it as a title formerly belonging to John Mark as the 'chazan' of a synagogue (vi. 9, note; it is so used in Luke iv. 20), and clinging to him after he became a Christian worker; 'they had with them also Mark the minister'. It is usually taken, however, to mean that he acted, in some capacity or other, as personal attendant to Barnabas and Saul, and possibly also as their assistant in ministerial work.

6. **Had gone through]** See viii. 4, note. They 'itinerated' through the island. St. Luke dismisses their tour, which must

was Bar-Jesus; which was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of

have occupied a considerable time, thus briefly, as it was concerned only with work among Jews and proselytes. He hastens to concentrate attention on their contact with a leading Gentile.

Paphos] See iv. 36, note. It was the capital of Cyprus, and was situated at the south-west extremity of the island. The Roman governor resided there.

Sorcerer] Or, 'Magian', the noun (*μάγος*, 'Magus') corresponding to the verb already noticed in viii. 9. Like Simon, this man posed as a philosopher and practised arts of magic.

A false prophet] Shewing that he professed to be inspired by God, and that his pseudo-science was blended with religious doctrines and pretensions. As Ramsay well says, 'He represented in his single personality both the modern fortune-teller and the modern man of science; and he had a religious as well as a more superstitious aspect to the outer world'. We may conceive of him, in Indian language, as a Guru, a 'Jyoshi' (astrologer), and a 'Mantravāti', all in one.

Bar-Jesus] His Jewish name, 'Son of Jesus or Joshua'. Cf. Bar-nabas, 'Bar-sabbas' (i. 23), etc. Josephus tells us (Antiq. xx. 7. 2) that Felix made use of just such a Jewish magician, also a Cypriot, Simon by name, to induce Drusilla to leave her husband and to come and marry him (xxiv. 24, note).

7. Which was with] That is, he was a member of the governor's entourage, in frequent attendance at his court, just as some learned Sanskrit 'Vidvān' (scholar) or some famous Guru or astrologer may often be found attached to the palace of an Indian Rājā.

The proconsul] The official title of the governor of a Roman province subject to the authority of the Senate (Introd. IV. 1). We find it used again in xviii. 12; xix. 38. Cyprus had, at one time, been an imperial province, when its governor bore

8 God. But Elymas the 'sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith.

1 Gr. *Magus*:
as in Matt.
ii. 1, 7, 16.

the title of 'pro-praetor', but Augustus transferred it to the Senate in 22 B. C. St. Luke, therefore is strictly accurate in calling the governor proconsul at this period.

Sergius Paulus] A Greek inscription was discovered in 1877 at Soloi on the north coast of Cyprus, dated 'in the proconsulship of Paulus'. This probably relates to the governor mentioned in our text. We know nothing further of him.

A man of understanding] 'An intelligent or sagacious man'. He was, clearly, interested in science and philosophy, and was, perhaps, making a special study of oriental lore. Hence his patronage of Elymas, and his desire to know the teaching of Barnabas and Saul. There may, also, have been spiritual longings in his heart which neither Greco-Roman philosophy nor the Magian's occultism had been able to satisfy.

Called unto him] They had probably been teaching in the synagogues of Paphos, and the fame of their doctrines had reached the governor's ears. With a genuine interest in philosophy and religion, he sent for the new itinerant teachers.

8. **Elymas]** This is, most probably, the Greek form of an Arabic word, 'Alim, meaning 'wise'. Cf. 'Ulamá, the plural form of 'Alim, and used by Muhammadans for the general body of learned theologians and canonists. A 'wise man' would be regarded as equivalent to 'Magian', and hence the explanation appended 'the sorcerer (Magian), for so is his name by interpretation'. The Bezan text, however, reads 'Etoimos', not 'Elymas'. Etoimos means 'Son of the Ready'.

Withstood them] A verb already used in vi. 10. This is one of the most interesting and critical scenes in the Acts. The representatives of light and darkness, of truth and falsehood, of pseudo-theosophy and true religion are ranged against each other. The Gospel was confronted, at Paphos, by those opposing forces of superstition and magic which had cast so potent a spell over

But Saul, who is also *called* Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fastened his eyes on him, and said, O ¹⁰ full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to

the Roman world. The same battle is being fought in India to-day. See *Introd.* VI. 6.

Seeking, etc.] Elymas' position as a member of the proconsul's suite was at stake, with his fame and livelihood. Self-interest gave vigour to his opposition. Those powers of darkness also, which lay behind his false system, strove hard to stem the progress of the Gospel.

The faith] Meaning either 'the Christian religion'; or, 'his putting trust in the Gospel'.

9. Saul, who is also called Paul] These simple words mark a great transition in the work of the apostle. He had, most probably, borne from infancy the Gentile name Paul (Paulus, little), along with his Hebrew name Saul, after the custom of the Jews of the dispersion (see *Introd.* V). But, so long as his work had lain among Jews and Jewish proselytes, he had used his Jewish name of Saul. Now, however, he stands as a Roman citizen in a Roman proconsul's court, on the threshold of a new work in the Roman world. Moreover, he is face to face with the Gentiles, as represented by the Roman governor, in all their spiritual need, and is leading his first Gentile convert to the knowledge of the Saviour. He will not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. The old name is abandoned, and with it, the old conservatism. He will henceforth be not Saul the Jew but Paul the missionary, Christ's faithful apostle to the Gentiles.

Filled with the Holy Ghost] Cf. iv. 8. A fresh accession of spiritual power for a new crisis.

Fastened his eyes on him] See. i. 10, for the same verb. In that piercing look, he read the impostor through and through.

10. All guile and all villany] The first of these words speaks of the Magian's 'craftiness and deceit'. The second one, found

- 11 pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun ¹for a season.
¹ Or, *until* And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to

only here (though a cognate noun occurs in xviii. 14), tells of his 'fatal facility in wickedness', meaning originally 'ease in doing anything', and then 'easiness, laziness, wickedness'.

Son of the devil] Cf. John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 10. His guile and villany betrayed their origin.

Enemy of all righteousness] The real test of any system or teaching is not to be found in marvellous phenomena, but in its power to produce righteousness of life, or otherwise (Matt. vii. 15-19).

Notice the reiteration of the word 'all' in this verse.

The right ways of the Lord] A free quotation from Hos. xiv. 9, LXX. Elymas had probably, in addition to his own crooked mode of life, perverted the Jewish Scriptures and misrepresented God's character, to support his doctrines. /

11. The hand of the Lord] God's power exercised in judgment (cf. Exod. ix. 15; Judges ii. 15).

Blind, not seeing the sun] The punishment corresponded to the offence. He had wilfully shut his eyes against the light of the Gospel, and now physical blindness, immediate and total, was to overtake him. It was a 'sign', too, of the eclipse of all such false systems before the power of Christ.

For a season] An expression found again only in Luke iv. 13. The blindness was not to be permanent, but would be removed when the Magian had recognized the hand of God.

Immediately] See iii. 7; v. 10, for the same word.

A mist] A word found only here in the New Testament. It is used by Galen and other Greek medical writers of an ophthalmic disease, and so comes suitably from the pen of St. Luke the physician.

lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, when he **12** saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, **13**

A darkness] This word also is used by Greek physicians in a technical sense. The whole description is graphic. There fell on Elymas a mist, which gradually deepened into total darkness and blindness.

Seeking] The tense is imperfect and adds to the vividness of the scene, 'He went groping about and continued in vain to seek for a helping hand'. No one dared to assist him. Thus false systems are rendered impotent by the power of Christ. We may contrast his previous 'seeking', as mentioned in v. 8.

Some to lead him by the hand] One word in the Greek, a compound noun, 'leaders-by-the-hand'. It is found only here. The cognate verb, however, occurs in ix. 8; xxii. 11. The scene must have reminded St. Paul of what happened on the road to Damascus.

12. Believed] It has been well said that 'the blindness of Elymas opened the eyes of the proconsul'. We do not know the extent or quality of the governor's faith (cf. viii. 13), but he was, apparently a thoroughly sincere man. Whether he became a pronounced convert and received baptism, or not, we cannot certainly say.

Being astonished at the teaching of the Lord] It was not merely the miracle but the teaching also which aroused his interest, wonder, and faith. The phrase 'teaching of the Lord' may mean either 'teaching about the Lord' or 'teaching from the Lord'.

13-52. PISIDIAN ANTIOCH. PAUL'S SPEECH

13. Paul and his company] Literally 'those around Paul'. He had now become the centre and leader of the little missionary band. From this time forth, his name takes precedence of that of Barnabas, save for the significant exceptions of xiv. 12; xv. 12, 25.

and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed
 14 from them and returned to Jerusalem. But they,
 passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of

Set sail] One of those nautical phrases for which St. Luke, as a Greek, shews a marked fondness. He uses the same verb again in the same technical sense in x.i. 11; xviii. 21; xx. 3, 13; xxi. 1-2; xxvii. 2, 4, 12, 21; xxviii. 10-11.

Perga in Pamphylia] For 'Pamphylia', see ii. 10, note. It lay N. N. W. of Cyprus, and was the natural district to make for, in furtherance of their missionary work. Perga was the chief city of Pamphylia, and seems to have been founded in the third century B. C. It lay five miles west of the river Cestrus, and about seven miles from the coast. Possibly, however, an out-lying port-town may have been situated on the Cestrus, to which vessels could sail direct up the river. While Attalia (xiv. 25) was a Greek colony, Perga was a centre of Asiatic influence. Its goddess Artemis and her worship were famous. It was an important city.

John departed] See xii. 12, note. His defection long left a painful impression on St. Paul's mind (xv. 38). Various reasons have been assigned for his action. (1) He may not have calculated, on sailing for Cyprus, on a prolonged tour involving many physical hardships and sufferings. As these multiplied, he drew back. The sight of a coasting vessel at Perga or its vicinity, bound for Palestine, may have given him a fit of 'home-sickness'. (2) He may have resented St. Paul's coming to the front and taking precedence of his cousin Barnabas. Jealousy often divides even earnest workers. (3) He may not have been prepared for St. Paul's expanding plans for definitely Gentile work. The old Jewish instincts and prejudices still clung about him. He is significantly termed John, not Mark, in this chapter (vv. 5, 13). While Saul takes a momentous step forward as Paul, Mark turns backward as John. Race feeling proved, for the time being, stronger than the constraining love of Christ. It makes for this explanation that we read in xv. 38, 'He went not with them to the work (of evangelizing the Gentiles)'.
 .

Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the 15

While all these considerations may have influenced him, the last was probably the deciding factor. It affords us a lesson in India. Racial and caste feelings of every kind disqualify us for fulfilling God's purposes and promoting the salvation of our fellow-men. If, as some think, St. Paul had, while in Perga, a severe attack of his constitutional malady, it would make John's defection at such a juncture all the more grievous.

14. But they] The pronoun is emphatic. Paul and Barnabas, at any rate, held bravely on their way.

Passing through from Perga] For the verb, see viii. 4, note. It may mean, as in many other passages, 'itinerating'; but the context rather suggests a 'passing through' without preaching (cf. xiv. 25). It would appear that their plan to preach in Pamphylia was suddenly changed, and that they proceeded direct to Pisidian Antioch. Ramsay thinks that an attack of St. Paul's malady was probably the reason. Whatever the natural cause may have been, a divine purpose lay behind it all.

Antioch of Pisidia] Better, 'Pisidian Antioch'. Pisidia was a country in southern Asia Minor, forming, at the period in question, part of the Roman province of Galatia. It was bounded on the south by Pamphylia, on the north by Phrygia, and on the west by Lycia. St. Paul crossed it on his way to Antioch on this occasion, and again on his return to Perga, (xiv. 24).

The city of Antioch was not really in the country of Pisidia, but in that of Phrygia. It is called by Strabo (A. D. 19), 'Antioch toward Pisidia', or 'Pisidian Antioch', to distinguish it from other Antiochs; and, since that part of Phrygia which was included in the Galatian province was gradually merged into Pisidia, the town came to be called, later, 'Antioch of Pisidia'. Like Antioch in Syria, it was founded by Seleucus Nicator in the third century B. C. and named after his father. The emperor Augustus made it a 'colony' and constituted it the military and administrative centre of

law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of

the southern portion of the province of Galatia. It was, therefore, the most important city in that part of Asia Minor. It lay about a hundred miles inland, and was situated on a lofty plain about 3600 feet above sea-level. It had a Latin organization, a Greek civilization, a Phrygian population, and contained a large settlement of Jews.

Ramsay, who thinks that St. Paul's constitutional malady was severe malarial fever, holds that the apostle was driven, after a sharp attack of such fever, from the low-lying country round Perga to the elevated plateau on which Antioch was built. This will not appeal, however, to those who are of opinion that his affliction was rather ophthalmic (Gal. iv. 15; vi. 11) or epileptic (Gal. iv. 14). Whatever may have been its nature, the immediate cause of his preaching the Gospel in S. Galatia was due in some way to an attack of it (Gal. iv. 13), whether that attack occurred in Perga, Antioch, or *en route* between the two. The road from Perga to Antioch lay across the Pisidian highlands which were infested by brigands. To his journey thither and back again to Perga may be referred some of those 'perils of rivers', and 'perils of robbers', of which we read in 2 Cor. xi. 26. As he crossed from Pamphylia into Pisidia, he entered the Roman province of Galatia.

Into the synagogue] See ix. 20; v. 5, notes.

Sat down] In the seat of the Rabbis, say some, as those prepared to preach and teach. It need not, however, mean more than that they 'sat down' with the rest of the congregation. They had probably become known already to the local Jews as itinerant preachers.

15. The reading of the law and the prophets] See vi. 9, note (synagogue). These synagogue 'lessons' were followed by a sermon or exhortation whenever competent speakers were present.

The rulers of the synagogue] There was usually only one such 'ruler' in an ordinary Jewish synagogue; but there is

exhortation for the people, say on. And Paul stood 16
up, and beckoning with the hand said,

Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken. The 17
God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted
the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt,
and with a high arm led he them forth out of
it. And for about the time of forty years 18
suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 1 Many ancient authorities read bare he them as a nursing father in the wilderness.
And when he had destroyed seven nations in 19
the land of Canaan, he gave *them* their land See Deut. i. 31.

evidence from inscriptions to shew that the title, in Asia Minor, was extended to the leading persons in a synagogue as well as to the usual officer.

16. Men of Israel] A term of honour, denoting the Jews as members of the theocratic nation (ii. 22, note). Cf. v. 26.

Ye that fear God] The God-fearing Gentiles, who attended the synagogue worship (x. 2, note).

St. Paul, shews his hearers God's preparation for the Gospel in the history of the Jewish race, before presenting to, and pressing home on them, the claims of Jesus the Messiah. He begins with the Exodus.

17. Exalted] By increasing their number and influence, and by a series of miraculous interventions on their behalf.

With a high arm, etc.] An echo of Exod. vi. 1, 6, LXX.

18. Suffered He their manners] The verb so rendered is found only here. It has the support of the majority of ancient manuscripts. As the margin shews, however, the change of a single letter in the Greek verb gives us a different and beautiful rendering favoured by some old authorities, 'Bare them as a nursing father'. This accords with the LXX of Deut. i. 31, to which allusion is here made. Both readings give excellent sense.

19. Seven nations] See Deut. vii. 1; xx. 17.

for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty
 20 years : and after these things he gave *them* judges until
 21 Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for
 a king : and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish,
 a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty
 22 years. And when he had removed him, he raised up
 David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness,
 and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man
 after my heart, who shall do all my ¹ will.
 23 Of this man's seed hath God according to ¹ Gr. *wills*.

For about four hundred and fifty years] Reckoned, as it seems, from the time of the first promise to Abraham on to the death of Joshua. The inheritance was potentially theirs all through that period, on the guarantee of the divine promise. Cf. vii. 5, 6, notes. ♪

20. Samuel the prophet] See iii. 24, note.

21. Saul . . . of the tribe of Benjamin] The speaker's own name and tribe.

Forty years] The duration of Saul's rule is not mentioned in the Old Testament; but cf. 2 Sam. ii. 10.

22. Removed] A Paulo-Lukan verb (Luke xvi. 4; Acts xix. 26; 1 Cor. xiii. 2; Col. i. 13). He was removed from the throne to make room for David, the ancestor of the promised Messiah.

I have found David] Taken from Ps. lxxxix. 20, LXX.

A man after my heart] An adaptation, almost verbatim, from the LXX of 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

Who shall do all my will] A reminiscence of Ps. xl. 8; Isa. xlv. 28. As the margin shows, 'will' is in the plural. It thus denotes not merely God's will in general, but all the indications of it in particular, 'all my wishes'.

23. This man's seed] The 'this' is emphatic. The Messiah was to be, as all Jews knew, the 'Son of David' (Ps. cxxxii. 11; Isa. xi. 10); and St. Paul emphasizes the fact that Jesus

promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; when **24**
 John had first preached¹ before his coming
 the baptism of repentance to all the people
 of Israel. And as John was fulfilling his <sup>1 Gr. before
the face of his
entering in.</sup> **25**
 course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am
 not *he*. But behold, there cometh one after me, the
 shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose.
 Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those **26**
 among you that fear God, to us is the word of this
 sprang, according to promise, from David's line and lineage
 (cf. Rom. i. 3).

Unto Israel] See iii. 25-6, notes. Though St. Paul is now embarking on his special mission to the Gentiles, he remembers the due order (Rom. i. 16).

A Saviour, Jesus] We shall remember that the name 'Jesus' is the Greek equivalent for 'Joshua', and means 'Jehovah saves' or 'Jehovah is salvation.' Salvation was the burden of St. Paul's message on this occasion (vv. 26, 38, 39, 47). Having shown that the Old Testament history of Israel led directly up to 'a Saviour Jesus', he goes on to speak of John the Baptist's witness to Him and of His own work for the salvation of men.

24. Coming] The Greek is 'entering in' (see margin). It denotes the entrance of our Lord on His public ministry. The word is found again in 1 Thess. i. 9; ii. 1; Heb. x. 19; 2 Pet. i. 11, passages which will afford an interesting study.

25. Course] A word denoting the runner's 'race'. It occurs again only in xx. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 7. In John the Baptist and Paul the apostle we have two notable athletes, each of whom ran a splendid race, the one as Christ's forerunner, the other as His swift messenger to the Gentiles.

Suppose] A verb peculiar to the Acts (xxv. 18; xxvii. 27).

26. Brethren] He addresses the Jewish and Gentile sections of his audience as in v. 16, but all as 'brethren', and in

27 salvation sent forth. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, 28 fulfilled *them* by condemning *him*: And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet asked they of 29 Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took 30 him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But 31 God raised him from the dead: and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the 32 people. And we bring you good tidings of the promise

the warmer tones, now, of affectionate appeal. Cf. ii. 29; iii. 17.

The word of this salvation] See v. 23, note. The Gospel message is one of salvation, deliverance here and now from the guilt and power of sin.

Sent forth] That is, by God. For the verb, see xii. 11, note.

27. And their rulers] Cf. iii. 17, and notes there.

Because they knew Him not, nor the voices, etc.] We may also render 'not having known Him, they have also (in addition to their failure to recognize Him), fulfilled, by their condemnation of Him, the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath'.

28. Yet asked they of Pilate] See iii. 13-14.

30. God raised Him] Once again, strong stress is laid on the resurrection (i. 22; ii. 24-32).

31. His witnesses] See i. 8, 22; ii. 32; iii. 15; v. 32; x. 41.

32. Bring you good tidings] See xviii. 4, for this verb.

The promise] Of the Messiah-Saviour (v. 23), a promise running all through the Old Testament, and especially connected

made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the 33 same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning 34 that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure *blessings* of David.

with the house of David. The resurrection was the proof and pledge that the promise was fulfilled.

33. Hath fulfilled] This compound verb, used only here, is intensive in meaning, 'hath completely fulfilled'.

Unto our children] So read the majority of ancient authorities. Some, however, have 'unto us, their children', and others would have it 'unto their children'. It has been suggested that the original reading was probably 'unto us, (the) children', and that different copyists added different possessive pronouns.

Raised up] See ii. 24, for the same verb. The one in v. 30, is different.

Thou art my Son] The quotation is from Ps. ii. 7, verbatim according to the LXX. The same words are quoted again in Heb. i. 5; v. 5. In this verse, they emphasize the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ 'was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead' (Rom. i. 4). His rising again was the official proof and proclamation of His sonship.

34. I will give you the holy and sure, etc.] A quotation from Isa. lv. 3, LXX. The original Hebrew of Isaiah runs, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David', the latter part of which is rendered by the Greek translators, 'the holy things of David, the sure things'. They frequently render the Hebrew word 'mercy' by the word here translated 'holy' (for which see ii. 27, note). These 'holy' (blessings) are God's promises to David, which are not only 'sacred' but also 'sure' and steadfast. Isaiah's prophecy was understood by the Jews to refer to 'the Son of David', the

- 35** Because he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou wilt not
36 give thy Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had ¹ in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:
37 but he whom God raised up saw no corrup-
38 tion. Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you

¹ Or, served his own generation by the counsel of God, fell on sleep

Or, served his own generation, fell on sleep by the counsel of God

Messiah; and the verse is quoted by the apostle to shew that the resurrection is both a seal and fulfilment of the promises and also a pledge of the indissoluble character of the everlasting covenant of grace. The word 'holy' occurs also in the following verse (thy Holy One), and links the two quotations together.

35. Thou wilt not give] A quotation from Ps. xvi. 10, already made by St. Peter in ii. 27, which see. In order to shew that these prophecies relate not to David but to Jesus the Messiah, St. Paul, as St. Peter had done before him (ii. 29-36), proceeds to mention David's death and burial.

36. After he had, etc.] The marginal readings are both permissible renderings, but, on the whole, that of the text seems best.

In his own generation] Whereas Christ's service and its results are permanent (Heb. v. 6; vii. 25).

Served] A verb peculiar to the Acts (xx. 34; xxiv. 23).

Counsel] See ii. 23, note.

Fell on sleep] See vii. 60, note.

37. Saw no corruption] And therefore it is to Him alone that the words of Ps. xvi. refer, and through Him alone that 'the holy and sure (blessings)' of the everlasting covenant are bestowed.

38. Through this man] Through Him, i. e. who died and rose and is alive for evermore, and through no other. Cf. iv. 12.

remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth 39
is justified from all things, from which ye could not
be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest 40
that come upon *you*, which is spoken in the prophets;

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and ^{1 Or, vanish} 41
^{away}
perish;

For I work a work in your days,
A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one
declare it unto you.

Remission of sins] See ii. 38. Only He who bore them and died to expiate them (John i. 29) has the right to remit them.

39. Every one that believeth] A characteristically Pauline phrase (Rom. i. 16; iii. 22; x. 4, 11). It includes Jew and Gentile on equal terms. It was this free offer of the Gospel, without distinction of persons, which produced such a deep impression on the audience and also on the Gentile population of Antioch (v. 44).

Is justified from all things] That is, 'Is accounted as absolved from all his offences, and is regarded as righteous in the sight of God for the merit's sake of Jesus Christ'. Here we have a clear statement of the great doctrine of justification by faith which is so strongly insisted on in St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. In the latter of these, he strenuously emphasizes the fact here stated, namely the inability of the law of Moses to make men righteous (Gal. ii. 15—iii. 22). This doctrine of justification by faith in Christ differentiates Christianity from all other religions.

The free offer of salvation is followed by a solemn warning as to the peril of rejecting it. Possibly, the preacher detected a spirit of resistance in some of his hearers.

40. In the prophets] As though, 'in the book of the prophets' (vii. 42, note). The quotation is from Hab. i. 5, almost verbatim according to the LXX.

41. Despisers] A noun peculiar to this verse. Its root idea is that of 'looking down upon', 'thinking lightly of'. It is

42 And as they went out, they besought that these words
43 might be spoken to them the next sabbath. Now when the
 synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout
 proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking
 to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

a dangerous thing for a man to disregard or set at nought the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I work a work] That is, a work of judgment on the impenitent.

42. As they went out] That is, 'as the apostles went out' before the general congregation dispersed.

Besought] Imperfect tense, 'continued to beseech'. It shows the interest and urgency of many of those who had heard the message.

43. Devout proselytes] For 'proselytes', see ii. 10, note. The word rendered 'devout' usually denotes, in the Acts, uncircumcised Gentile worshippers (v. 50; xvi. 14; xvii. 4, 17; xviii. 7; Cf. x. 2, note). Being joined here, however, with the word 'proselytes' (circumcised converts to Judaism), it denotes simply the devout, religious character of such converts.

Followed] As though, 'to their place of lodging'. The apostles had left the synagogue before the congregation broke up (v. 42).

Urged] Literally, 'continued to persuade them' (imperfect tense). For the verb, see xvii. 4, note.

To continue in] See xi. 23, note, where the same verb occurs (cleave unto).

The grace of God] Cf. xi. 23, note. With the latter passage, this verse forms a sort of transition to a series of passages in the Acts (xiv. 3, 26; xv. 11, 40; xviii. 27; xx. 24, 32) which place God's grace in definite connexion with the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles. It helps to give us a new conception of that 'grace' as 'the surprising mercy of God by which those who had been wholly outside the privileged circle were

And the next sabbath almost the whole city was 44 gathered together to hear the word of ¹ God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and ² blasphemed. And Paul and Barnabas 46

¹ Many ancient authorities read *the Lord*.

² Or, *railed*

now the recipients of the divine favour' (Dean Armitage Robinson). In St. Paul's Epistles, this sense of the word is still more strongly emphasized. The meaning of 'grace' becomes clearer to us in India as we see men of all races and classes made common partakers of eternal life.

44. Almost the whole city] A general term, meaning a great multitude. Doubtless, the new teachers and their message had been the talk of the town. And the apostles would not be idle during the week.

Gathered together] In and around the synagogue. The verb is often used of church and other assemblies (xi. 26; xiv. 27; xv. 6, 30; xx. 7-8). The word synagogue is derived from it.

The word of God] Notice the recurrence of this phrase in this chapter (vv. 5, 7, 44, 46, 48; and 'word of the Lord', v. 49, and vv. 44, 48, margiu). The Gospel appealed to the Gentiles as being God's message to them.

45. Filled with jealousy] The same phrase as in ch. v. 17. As there, so also here, it carries the double sense of zeal for their own sect and envy of others. The attraction of the Gentiles to the Gospel of the Messiah stirred up all the Jewish pride of race. In such a crowd would be Romans, Greeks and Phygians, whom they had been wont to regard as 'common and unclean' (x. 14). We can imagine the angry zeal of a number of orthodox Brahmins if they found foreigners and out-castes suddenly admitted to their religious circle on equal terms.

Contradicted] Imperfect tense. The contradiction was loud and long. The same verb is used again in xxviii. 19, 22.

Blasphemed] Reviled the name of Jesus Christ (xviii. 6; xxvi. 11).

spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy
 47 of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*,

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,

That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.

46. Spake out boldly] See ix. 27, 29, for the same verb. Their courage rose with opposition, and they spoke freely and boldly.

To you] Emphatic, 'to you, the Jews, as the natural heirs of the promises' (iii. 25-6).

Thrust it from you] See vii. 27, for the same verb. As their forefathers had 'thrust away' their deliverer Moses, so they were now 'thrusting away' the Prophet-Saviour of whom Moses spake.

Judge yourselves] That is, 'pronounce sentence on yourselves by your actions'.

Eternal life] The great gift of the Gospel, spiritual life found and realized in union with Jesus Christ, and enduring for ever (cf. John iii. 15, 16, 36; v. 24; xvii. 3; 1 John v. 13, 20). From another point of view, it corresponds with the salvation of vv. 26, 47.

Lo] A little word, but one ushering in a mighty revolution, the free extension of the Gospel to the outside Gentile world.

We turn to the Gentiles] And thus, for the first time, the preachers of the Gospel turned their back on the Jewish synagogue and addressed themselves directly to the Gentile population. Cf. xviii. 6; xix. 9. It was, perhaps, the most critical moment in the whole history of the Acts.

47. For so, etc.] St. Paul justifies the momentous step he is now taking by a quotation from the Jewish Scriptures, taken from Isa. xlix. 6, verbatim according to the LXX. The reference in the original passage is to 'the servant of the Lord' (iii. 13, note),

And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and 48 glorified the word of, ¹ God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 1 Many ancient authorities read the Lord. And the word of the Lord was spread 49 abroad throughout all the region. But the Jews 50

the great Messiah. It is clearly alluded to in the 'Nunc Dimittis' (Luke ii. 30-2).

Unto the uttermost part of the earth] The identical phrase used by our Lord in giving His last commission to His disciples (i. 8). The reference in 'the Lord commanded us' may be to the charge contained in that commission: or, it may be to the Old Testament prophecy considered as involving an injunction.

48. Were glad] They 'rejoiced', because Jesus Christ was offered as the 'light of the Gentiles'. The note of joy is thus struck again (viii. 8, 39; Introd. VI. 9).

Ordained to eternal life] Cf. Rom. viii. 29, 30; Eph. i. 4-6, etc. God's sovereign grace and man's free will are both emphasized in Scripture. While many of the Jews of Antioch deliberately rejected 'eternal life' (v. 46), a large number of Gentiles, on the other hand, thankfully accepted it, by God's enabling grace, and believed. Thus 'the first thoroughly Gentile congregation, separate from the synagogue, was established at Pisidian Antioch' (Ramsay).

49. Was spread abroad] As usual, opposition was followed by further expansion. The tense is imperfect, pointing to a continual diffusion of the Gospel. The truth would be spread abroad not only by the missionaries and the new converts, but by many of those who, coming to such an administrative centre as Antioch for purposes of trade, litigation, idolatrous festivals, etc., would be brought into contact with the Christians and would carry away with them the new doctrine. We may reasonably suppose that a considerable period was occupied in this way.

All the region] The Romans appear to have divided a large province like Galatia into a certain number of 'regions' or

urged on the devout women of honourable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their

'districts', for administrative purposes; just as, in India, a province is sub-divided into districts or zillahs, each with its own administrative staff. An inscription has been found in Antioch relating to a 'regionary' centurion. That city was the political and military centre of such a 'region', called (xvi. 6) 'the Phrygian region of (the province) Galatia'. Thus, from the head-quarters city, the Gospel was propagated throughout all the zillah.

50. Urged on] A verb peculiar to this verse. The progress of the Gospel vexed and alarmed them.

The devout women] For 'devout', see v. 43; x. 2. They were uncircumcised adherents of Judaism. They are described as 'of honourable estate' (Mark xv. 43; Acts xvii. 12), being probably the wives of leading citizens and influential persons. Women had an important status in Asia Minor, being sometimes even appointed as magistrates. In this they differed widely from the women of Greece.

The chief men of the city] Denoting, most likely, the leading 'city councillors'. Some understand it to include the chief Roman magistrates. The persons in question were probably influenced in their action by their wives.

Stirred up] A verb used again in xiv. 2.

A persecution] See viii. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 11 indicates that St. Paul suffered personal violence at Antioch, and it has been suggested that one of the 'beatings with rods' (of Roman lictors) referred to in 2 Cor. xi. 25 may have occurred at Pisidian Antioch, the Roman magistrates there, as in all such colonies, being attended by lictors (see xvi. 22, note). It was probably, too, the scene of one of the five beatings by the Jews mentioned in 2 Cor. xi. 24.

Cast them out of their borders] That is, out of the city and its immediate environs, not out of the 'region' or zillah. Higher sanction would have been required for that.

borders. But they shook off the dust of their feet 51 against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disci- 52 ples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

51. Shook off the dust] See Matt. x. 14; Mark vi. 11; ch. xviii. 6, for the same verb; and cf. Luke x. 11. It was a sign of leaving them to their own obstinate ways.

Iconium] An ancient city belonging to Phrygia, but near the border of Lycaonia. It was situated in a fertile spot, and was also an important commercial town, since one of the main roads between Cilicia and the west passed through it. Jews were numerous there. It was distant from Antioch about eighty-five miles by road, and was, so to speak, an outlying town in the region or zillah of Antioch, though much less important than the latter, from a political point of view.

52. Were filled with joy] Imperfect tense, 'continued to be filled with joy', in spite of the departure of their teachers (cf. viii. 39, note), and notwithstanding the opposition and persecution which prevailed. Cf. Matt. v. 12. We learn from 1 Thess. i. 6 that 'the joy of the Holy Ghost' is specially intended for persecuted Christians.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XIII.

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) The call to foreign missionary work, at Antioch (Syrian). vv. 1-4.
- (2) The commencement of missionary work at Cyprus. vv. 5-12.
- (3) The continuation of missionary work at Pisidian Antioch. vv. 13-52.

(The sermon. vv. 16-41.

(The stir. vv. 42-52.

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) Typical foreign missionaries. vv. 1-4.
 - (a) Tested and fruitful in the home-ministry. v. 1 (ch. xi. 23-6).
 - (b) Diligent and self-denying in God's service. v. 2.
 - (c) Called and sent forth by the Holy Ghost. vv. 2, 4.

I And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of Jews and of

- (d) Separated and dedicated to their special work. vv. 2, 3.
- (e) Commissioned as representatives of the home Church. v. 3.
- (f) Obedient at once to the Spirit's call and control. v. 4.
- (2) A typical encounter. vv. 6-12. Truth *versus* falsehood; the Gospel *versus* superstition.
 - (a) Superstition in the ascendant. vv. 6, 7.
 - (b) Superstition threatened. v. 7 (by the 'word of God').
 - (c) Superstition roused to opposition. v. 8.
 - (d) Superstition exposed. vv. 9, 10 (in its true character).
 - (e) Superstition routed. v. 11 (rendered impotent).
 - (f) Superstition despoiled. v. 12 (of its victims).
- (3) A typical discourse. vv. 16-41 (to Hellenistic Jews and their adherents).
 - (a) A Saviour promised. vv. 16-25 (in the Old Testament Scriptures).
The Exodus, wilderness deliverances, judges, prophets, kings, all pointing to our need of Him.
 - (b) A Saviour provided. vv. 26-37.
Announced, crucified, risen, alive for evermore.
 - (c) A Saviour presented. vv. 38-41 (to all alike, for their acceptance).
Invitation, followed by warning. Some rejected Him (vv. 45-6); others accepted Him (vv. 43, 48, 49, 52).

CHAPTER XIV

1-6. ICONIUM

I. Iconium] See xiii. 51.

Together] Some, however, render 'in the same way' (as at Antioch). Cf. xiii. 14.

Greeks] This word (Hellenes) denotes 'Gentiles' as contrasted with Hellenistic Jews (see vi. 1; xi. 20, notes). It has an ethnical sense, indicating non-Jews of Greek extraction or proclivities (xvi. 1, 3; xviii. 4; xix. 10, 17; xx. 21; xxi. 28):

Greeks believed. But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore they tarried *there* speaking boldly in the Lord, which bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their

Since, however, some of these were attracted to the Jewish synagogue and became, in varying degrees, adherents of Judaism we read of them as a special class, 'devout Greeks' (xvii. 4). It is possibly to such that allusion is made here (as in xi. 20), since the missionaries were preaching in the synagogue and since the 'Gentiles' are differentiated in v. 2. At the same time, the account of the work in Iconium is greatly condensed, and v. 1 may refer not only to what took place in the synagogue but also to the results which followed in the city, in which case the word 'Greeks' may bear its wider meaning. The expression 'a great multitude' rather favours this view. ;

2. The Jews that were] The terseness of the narrative suggests that much which had transpired in Pisidian Antioch was repeated in Iconium, and hence St. Luke thought it unnecessary to write in greater detail.

Disobedient] The aorist tense of the participle (that were disobedient) seems to imply that a definite crisis occurred, subsequent to the first preaching in the synagogue, when the Jews, as at Antioch, 'were filled with jealousy' (xiii. 45) because of the conversion of the Gentiles. Cf. xix. 9, where the same verb occurs.

Stirred up] See xiii. 50, for the same word.

Made them evil affected] The verb here employed means generally 'to ill-treat' (see vii. 6, 19; xii. 1; xviii. 10). Thus it conveys the sense that 'they vitiated the souls of the Gentiles and roused them to *ill-treat* the brethren', that is, the Christians.

3. Long time] See ix. 23, note.

Therefore] That is, on account alike of the encouragement (v. 1) and the opposition (v. 2), which they had experienced.

4 hands. But the multitude of the city was divided; and
5 part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And
when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and
of the Jews with their rulers, to entreat them shamefully,

Just as they had tarried in Pisidian Antioch after the first
storm of opposition (xiii. 45-9).

Speaking boldly] See xiii. 46; ix. 27, note.

In the Lord] Literally, '(relying) on the Lord'. He is regarded
as the ground and support on which their courage and freeness
of speech rested. Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 2.

The word of His grace] As though, 'the message of that
surprising mercy which embraces all men, Jew and Gentile'
(see xiii. 43, note).

We have, in the Acts, the following expressions:—

- (a) The word of God (iv. 31; vi. 2, 7; viii. 14; xi. 1; xii.
24; xiii. 5, 7, 44, 46, 48; xvii. 13; xviii. 11).
- (b) The word of the Lord (viii. 25; xiii. 49; xv. 35, 36; xix.
10, 20).
- (c) The word of the Gospel (xv. 7).
- (d) The words of the Lord Jesus (xx. 35).
- (e) The word of this salvation (xiii. 26).
- (f) The word of His grace (xx. 32). ✓

Signs and wonders] See ii. 22, note; and cf. ii. 43; iv. 30;
v. 12; vi. 8; vii. 36; xv. 12.

4. **Was divided]** The verb occurs again in xxiii. 7. Wherever
the Gospel is presented, a division takes place between those who
accept and those who reject it. We have already seen disobedient
Jews (v. 2) ranged against believing Jews (v. 1), and opposing
Gentiles (v. 2) against believing Greeks (v. 1). Now the whole
population is divided into two camps, those for Christ and those
against Him.

5. **An onset]** This noun occurs again only in Jas. iii. 4
(impulse), but the cognate verb is used in Matt. viii. 32; Mark
v. 13; Luke viii. 33; Acts vii. 57; xix. 29 (rush). We gather that
a 'rush' was made by this mixed crowd of Jew and Gentile

and to stone them, they became aware of it, and fled ⁶ unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and

opponents towards the direction of the quarter in which the missionaries were lodging, with intent to stone them, but that they were warned in time and escaped.

With their rulers] Some interpret this of the town magistrates; others of the heads of the Jewish community. Both the Greek construction and the mention of stoning favour the latter interpretation.

To entreat them shamefully] This verb, found again only in Matt. xxii. 6; Luke xi. 45; xviii. 32; 1 Thess. ii. 2, combines the ideas of insulting and outraging. St. Paul had himself been guilty of such actions against the Christians in former days; 1 Tim. i. 13, where a cognate noun is used (injurious).

6. Fled] A compound verb found otherwise only in Heb. vi. 18. They acted on Christ's own instructions in so doing (Matt. x. 23). ;

Lycaonia] The name of a large country consisting chiefly of a level plain, which had formerly been included in the Seleucid empire. At the period before us, it consisted of two distinct parts, the eastern one being attached to the Native State of Antiochus king of Commagene, while the western one was under direct Roman rule and was included in the province of Galatia. We may compare it to such a country as Rájputána, a small portion of which, Ajmere-Merwára is directly under British rule, while the rest consists of Feudatory States. It was in the Roman part of Lycaonia that Paul and Barnabas preached, and in which the cities Lystra and Derbe were situated. It was bounded on the north by Galatia proper; on the west by Phrygia and Pisidia; on the east by Cappadocia; and on the south by mountain spurs jutting out from Mt. Taurus.

Lystra] A city about eighteen miles SSW. of Iconium. We know nothing of it till the founding of a Roman colony there by Augustus 6 B. C., as a defence against the brigands who infested the Taurus range to the south. As a 'colony', its

7 the region round about: and there they preached the gospel.

8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speaking:

government and organization were Latin. Otherwise, in its more remote situation, as the narrative shews, it was distinctly less Graecized and civilized than either Pisidian Antioch or Iconium.

Derbe] A frontier city of the Galatian province, on the main road leading south-east from Lystra. Very little is known of its history. It was about thirty miles distant from Lystra.

The region] See xiii. 49, note. We have here another of those 'regions' into which south Galatia was divided by the Roman administrators. It was termed, officially, 'Galatica Lycaonia', after the province of Galatia to which it was attached. Popularly, however, it seems to have been known as the 'Galatic region', a name given to it by the inhabitants of that part of Lycaonia included in the client-State of Commagene (see xviii. 23, note). Thus, in travelling from Iconium to Lystra, the missionaries passed from 'the Phrygian region' into 'the Galatic region' of Roman Lycaonia. The latter began a few miles south and east of Iconium.

7. **There they preached the Gospel]** More accurately, 'there they were (engaged in) preaching the Gospel'. See viii. 4, note, for the verb. The Bezan text adds 'And the entire population were moved at the teaching; but Paul and Barnabas continued in Lystra'. This sounds, however, like a later embellishment. We have no record in this chapter of their actually preaching anywhere else than in the towns of Lystra and Derbe; but we may believe that, as at Pisidian Antioch, the whole 'region' was more or less influenced (xiii. 49).

8-21. **LYSTRA. THE CRIPPLE HEALED. PAUL'S SPEECH. DERBE.**

8. **Impotent]** The same word is often used, in the same sense, by Greek medical writers.

who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be ¹made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. ^{1 Or, saved} 10
 And he leaped up and walked. And when the 11

A cripple from his mother's womb] The same expression as in iii. 2. The two miracles should be carefully compared.

Who never had walked] St. Luke piles phrase on phrase to shew the man's helpless condition. Evidently, he attached great importance to this miracle as a 'sign'. Ramsay and others see in it a special credential given by God to the new departure among the Gentiles of Galatia (cf. v. 3). St. Paul, in writing to the Galatians, specially refers to his miraculous gifts (Gal. iii. 5). The Bezan reading adds 'being in the fear of God', thus regarding the cripple as a Gentile adherent of Judaism (xiii. 16, note). This is probable. /

Heard] The tense is imperfect, according to the preponderance of MSS. evidence, 'he heard repeatedly'. A Bezan text adds, with a touch of life, 'gladly'.

Fastening his eyes] See i. 10, for the same verb; and cf. iii. 4.

Made whole] Margin, 'saved'. See iv. 9, note.

10. Stand upright] For 'stand', see ix. 6, note (arise). The adjective 'upright' occurs again only in Heb. xii. 13 (straight). It was often used by medical writers with the word 'stand', as here. Such standing upright would evidence a complete cure. The Bezan text is very graphic here, 'Said with a loud voice, I say unto thee in the name of Jesus Christ, "Stand upright on thy feet and walk". And immediately on the moment, he leaped up and walked.'

Leaped up] The same verb as in iii. 8. The tense is aorist, 'leaped up with one bound'.

Walked] Imperfect tense, as in iii. 8, 'he began to walk' or 'he went on walking'.

multitudes saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 ^{1 Gr. Zeus.} And they called Barnabas, ¹ Jupiter; and Paul,

11. They lifted up their voice] Cf. ii. 14; xxii. 22. The aorist tense points to a sudden burst of sound. Such an immediate outburst of cry is characteristic of an eastern crowd.

The speech of Lycaonia] The Greek language would be known only to the educated few, in an out-of-the way town like Lystra. The less cultured populace spoke only their native vernacular, and it was in this that they would give vent to their feelings. It is clear from what follows that Paul and Barnabas did not understand what the people were freely saying in their own mother-tongue. It was only later events which shewed them the real feelings and object of the crowd (vv. 13, 14). It was as though Europeans, ignorant of the Indian vernaculars, saw an excited multitude vigorously vociferating in Hindi, Urdu, or Tamil, without knowing what the people were actually saying.

The gods are come down to us] The pagan peoples of that age commonly believed that their gods visited the earth from time to time in human guise. In particular, they had a well-known myth that Jupiter and Mercury had visited, in human form, an old Phrygian peasant woman named Baucis and her husband Philemon who, though ignorant of the nature of their guests, entertained them so hospitably that they received special boons and honours from the gratified deities. Lystra was not far away from the locality in which the scene of this myth was cast, and no doubt the superstitious Lystrians thought that Paul and Barnabas were the old deities returned to earth again to confer special boons on men. Indian readers will call to mind such stories of Hindu mythology as Siva's visit in mendicant guise to test the piety of the devotee Máran, etc.

12. Jupiter] Greek, 'Zeus'. The chief god in the Graeco-Roman pantheon. He was regarded as the great father and

¹ Mercury because he was the chief speaker. ¹ Gr. *Hermes*.
 And the priest of ² Jupiter whose *temple* was ² Gr. *Zeus*. 13
 before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates,

lord of all, gods and men alike. In some respects, he corresponds with the Hindu god Brahmá; in others, with Indra. Like the former, he is represented as originator of all; like the latter, as presiding over the other 'devas' and as holding a thunderbolt. He is pictured as of majestic appearance, with a flowing beard. The Lystrians probably likened Barnabas to him because of his more venerable mien and his comparative silence. The greater was regarded as acting through the lesser.

Mercury] Greek, 'Hermes'. Son of Jupiter, and the messenger and interpreter of the gods, especially of Zeus. He was the patron deity of orators, merchants, etc. He was regarded as the inventor of speech. To the pagans of Lystra, St. Paul, on account of his activity in preaching, etc., appeared to be Barnabas' spokesman and interpreter.

13. **The priest]** The Bezan text has 'priests', as though there were a college of them attached to the temple. We are only too familiar, in India, with the sight of such 'pújaris' or priests of idol-temples, who attend to the washing, anointing, clothing, garlanding, food, etc. of their deities, as well as to their 'pújá' or worship at stated times of the day.

Jupiter whose (temple) was before the city] Literally. 'Zeus, who is before the city'. The word temple does not occur in the original. The god himself is considered as being present before the city, in his shrine or temple. The Bezan text reads 'the (god) Zeus-before-the-city', suggesting that an old tutelary deity, probably an Asiatic one, had long been worshipped there in a temple standing outside the city walls (perhaps from a period when no city existed), and had become known as 'Zeus' owing to the spread of Greek influence and mythology. In many parts of this land we may see temples near the entrance of a town or village, in which local patron deities are similarly worshipped. And there are many instances of the adoption of such local deities, and even of demons, into the Aryan pantheon.

and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes.

Oxen] We have instances, in the classics, of the sacrifice of bulls to Jupiter and Mercury. The 'Gó-médha', or cow-sacrifice, was once prevalent in India (vide *Taittiriya Bráhmāna*). Though the practice has now practically ceased, there are yet instances in which buffaloes, etc., are slain annually as sacrifices: while the offering of goats is very common in some parts of the country. All this shews how widespread is the feeling, only adequately satisfied in the Gospel, that 'apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission' of sin.

Garlands] It is part of the daily duty of the Indian 'pújári' to garland the idol. Sometimes, too, garlands are placed on the head or neck of sacrificial victims.

Unto the gates] This is variously explained.

- (a) It is referred to the city gates, the priest (or priests) having prepared the sacrifice and garlands at the temple outside and then formed a procession to do worship to the supposed gods who were inside the city.
- (b) It is taken to mean the temple gates, the intention being to offer the sacrifice before the shrine of the idol there, in honour of the god's supposed condescension in visiting the city in human guise. The suggestion, in this case, is that the preliminaries took place at the outer gateway of the temple area.
- (c) It is understood to indicate the gate or vestibule (x. 17; xii. 13) of the house in which Paul and Barnabas were lodging. They had, apparently, retired thither after the miracle in ignorance of the intentions of the populace. It was only the approach of the sacrificial procession that opened their eyes to the facts.

Of these, the last is the most natural explanation, though it is an objection to it that the word 'gate' is in the plural, as though denoting an entrance more pretentious than that of a private house. But, as we know nothing of the place of their lodging, whether it was a house or otherwise, this objection can

But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, 14 they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these 15 things? We also are men of like ¹passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea,

¹ Or, *nature*

hardly be considered fatal. It is far more likely that they would interrupt idolatrous worship about to be offered to themselves than that they would run out of the city to interfere with proceedings taking place at the temple beyond the town walls. Idolatrous processions and *pújás* are common enough in India, especially at annual local festivals.

14. The apostles] The title was not confined to the twelve. It is here given to Paul and Barnabas. It was borne also by James, the Lord's brother (Gal. i. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 7); by Apollos (1 Cor. iv. 6-9); and possibly, by Andronicus and Junias (Rom. xvi. 7); etc. See i. 2, note. Paul and Barnabas were not gods, as the people supposed, but simple 'missionaries' of Jesus Christ.

Rent their garments] For the same expression, see Matt. xxvi. 65; Mark xiv. 63. It was a token of horror and distress.

Sprang forth] A verb found only here. A somewhat similar one (sprang in) occurs in xvi. 29. It was most likely from their place of lodging that they thus sprang forth (v. 13, note).

15. We] The 'we' and the 'men' are both emphatic, 'We, whom you think to worship, are men and nothing more.'

Of like passions] One word in the Greek, an adjective found again only in Jas. v. 17. It means 'of like nature and feelings', human in all respects.

Bring . . . good tidings] The verb so frequent in the Acts (viii. 4, note).

The Bezan text has it 'bring you good tidings of the God'. The pagans of Asia Minor were wont to speak of the supreme deity as 'the God', just as many in India to-day differentiate

- 16 and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways.
 17 And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and

the Supreme Being from 'the gods many and lords many' of the Hindu pantheon (cf. xvii. 23, margin). It is the work of the Christian preacher to proclaim Him, as He is revealed in Christ Jesus.

Vain things] The Jews were accustomed to speak of the idols of the heathen as 'vanities' or 'no-things' (Deut. xxxii. 21; 1 Sam. xii. 21; Jer. xiv. 22).

The living God] As against the dead idols of the heathen (cf. 1 Thess. i. 9).

Who made the heaven, etc.] An echo of Exod. xx. 11. Every missionary and evangelist knows how necessary it is, in preaching to a company of polytheists, to lay down clearly just these fundamental facts, namely, that there is one God, the living God, the Creator of all things.

16. Suffered all the nations, etc.] That is, He left them without any such special revelation as He had vouchsafed to the Jews. /

17. Left not Himself without witness] Cf. xvii. 26-30; Rom. i. 18-22; ii. 14-16. The phenomena of nature and the dictates of conscience, with the spiritual aspirations of mankind, all 'witness' to the existence of a living, almighty, righteous and beneficent God.

He did good] A verb peculiar to this verse. This and the two verbs which follow are all present participles (doing good; giving; filling), and speak of the continual beneficence of God. He goes on doing good, in spite of man's forgetfulness of Him (Matt. v. 45). This contrasts greatly with the conceptions of many people in this land, who look upon their deities as jealous and angry, needing to be constantly propitiated in order that they may remove sickness and confer temporal blessings.

gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained¹⁸ they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

But there came Jews thither from Antioch and¹⁹ Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing

Rains and fruitful seasons] We know well, in lands like this, how entirely dependent we are, for prosperity, on these. The failure of the usual monsoons means scarcity and famine and untold suffering; whereas plentiful rain in due season brings 'food and gladness'. For 'gladness', see ii. 28.

18. Scarce] 'With great difficulty' (xxvii. 7, 8, 16; Rom. v. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 18). We can imagine, from an Indian standpoint, how difficult it must have been to persuade an excited crowd, full of religious frenzy, to desist from the idolatrous ceremonies they had set their hearts upon.

19. Jews from Antioch and Iconium] The strength of their enmity is shewn by their dogging the steps of the missionaries (cf. xvii. 13); and that, in the case of the Antiochian Jews, for a distance of over a hundred miles. Some time may reasonably be supposed to have elapsed between verses 18 and 19.

Having persuaded the multitudes] The people of Lycaonia were proverbially fickle. On this occasion they proved true to their character. Cf. Gal. i. 6; iii. 1; v. 7-9. The Jewish emissaries, by whatever arguments, influenced the superstitious Lys-trians at least not to oppose their own violent action. We need not suppose that the people of Lystra themselves used violence to the missionaries.

They stoned Paul] That is, the Jews from Antioch and Iconium did so. Stoning was a Jewish mode of punishment. Here we have an undesigned coincidence with 2 Cor. xi. 25. Possibly, St. Paul received on this occasion some of those scars to which he alludes in Gal. vi. 17.

Dragged] See viii. 3, for the same verb (haling).

Supposing that he was dead] He was not dead, however. Again we have a coincidence with 2 Cor. xi. 23, 'in deaths oft'. Cf. 2 Cor. iv. 9, 10.

20 that he was dead. But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, 22 and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls

20. The disciples] The work in Lystra had not been fruitless (cf. ix. 25). The lame man healed was one of the converts. Timothy was, almost certainly, another (1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. iii. 11). Lois and Eunice were also numbered among the 'disciples' (2 Tim. i. 5). There were others whose names are unknown to us.

Stood round about him] In sympathy, sorrow, and anxiety,—feeling, most likely, that all was over with him.

Rose up, etc.] Both the miraculous character of his recovery and his Christian courage are noteworthy.

On the morrow] His speedy recovery from the effects of the stoning is striking.

To Derbe] See v. 6, note. A journey of thirty miles meant considerable powers of endurance after the experience of the day before. There were also risks and dangers attending it in that remote region.

21. Preached the Gospel] See viii. 4, note. Derbe was a smaller town than the other Galatian cities in which they had been labouring. They seem to have met with no special opposition there.

Made many] This tells of a considerable period of steady and successful work. Gaius was, most probably, one of the converts (xx. 4).

They returned] Derbe was on the frontier of the Roman province. They did not cross that frontier into the Native State of Commagene, but retraced their steps in order to revisit the Galatian converts.)

of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed 22 for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom

22-28. RETURN TO SYRIAN ANTIOCH.

22. Confirming] A verb peculiar to the Acts (xv. 32, 41; xviii. 23), and always used of strengthening the faith of new converts by timely counsel and encouragement. The Epistle to the Galatians shews how essential such work was. We know the necessity of it in the modern mission field, where temptations to backslide are so strong and numerous.

Continue in] A compound verb, differing slightly from the one used in xiii. 43, and found again only in Gal. iii. 10; Heb. viii. 9. The Jews had failed to 'continue in' the old covenant; let Christians, by God's enabling grace, 'continue in' the faith of the Gospel and in their life of trust in the Saviour. Cf. xi. 23.

Through many tribulations] Or 'afflictions'. This word is frequent in St. Paul's writings (e. g. Rom. v. 3; viii. 35; xii. 12; 2 Cor. i. 4; iv. 17; vi. 4; Phil. iv. 14; 1 Thess. i. 6; iii. 3, 7; 2 Thess. i. 4; etc). Of all men, he had perhaps the fullest share of them (ix. 16; 2 Cor. xi. 23-8). The word speaks of tribulations from without, in the sense of a crushing weight. We see that the Jewish opposition still continued in the Galatian cities and that the new converts were in danger of becoming disheartened by it. Such details appeal to us forcibly in India, where converts have to undergo many tribulations, great and small.

23. Appointed] A simpler form of the verb used in x. 41 (chosen before), which see. Since it means primarily 'to elect or appoint by stretching out the hand (as those voting)', it may perhaps suggest that the congregations elected their own ministers (cf. vi. 3-6). It only occurs again in 2 Cor. viii. 19, where such a meaning is clearly present. But, as the verb came to

24 they had believed. And they passed through Pisidia, 25 and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken

mean simply 'to appoint' (by whatsoever method), this elective sense cannot be certainly insisted on. In any case, a real call by the Holy Spirit was considered essential (xx. 28; xiii. 2). We see what pains the apostles took to organize the new churches as soon as possible. Ministers with proper qualifications, and appointed by due authority, are necessary for the well-being of any Christian congregation. /

Elders] Or 'presbyters'. See xi. 30, note. They were the ministers responsible for the welfare of the congregations and the conduct of public worship. It was St. Paul's practice to arrange for their appointment in all the Gentile churches (xx. 17). They were also termed 'bishops' or 'overseers' (xx. 28), till, in the second century, that title came to be confined to the leader or president of each church, so as finally to acquire its present meaning.

Church] See ch. v. 11, note.

Prayed with fasting] Cf. vi. 6; xiii. 3. These, with the laying on of hands, seem to have been the chief features in primitive 'ordinations'. It is strange that the laying on of hands is not mentioned here, but the writer probably took it for granted, as he had alluded to several times before.

Commended them to the Lord] That is, to Christ, the Head of the Church, on whom their faith was fixed. Cf. xx. 32. Thus the work of Paul and Baranbas, in revisiting and organizing the new churches, was fourfold, *confirmation, exhortation, ordination, and commendation* (to the Lord). Lines are hereby laid down for us to follow in our modern mission fields.

24. Passed through] That is, 'made a missionary journey through', 'itinerated through the district' (viii. 4, note). On their journey outward from Pamphylia they do not appear to have preached *en route* (xiii. 14, note); but on their return journey they preached the Gospel from place to place as they travelled.

Pisidia] See xiii. 14, note. They crossed the passes of the mountains of Pisidia to the plain of Pamphylia beyond, possibly

the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia; and 26 thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they were come, and 27 had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how that encountering many perils and adventures by the way (2 Cor. xi. 26).

Pamphylia] See xiii. 13, note.

25. Perga] See xiii. 13, note. This time, at least, they delivered the message of the Gospel there.

Went down] The correct word to use, as Attalia was some miles distant on the low-lying seacoast.

Attalia] This town was founded, near the mouth of the river Catarrhactes, by Attalus II Philadelphus, king of Pergamos, in the middle of the second century B. C., and called after him. It had a good harbour. The apostles had formerly sailed up the river Cestrus direct to Perga; now they go by land, about sixteen miles, from Perga to the seaport Attalia, to find a ship there bound for Syria.

26. Sailed] See xiii. 4, note.

27. Had gathered together] See xiii. 44, note. The gathering was the precursor of modern missionary meetings for giving information.

Rehearsed] This verb occurs again in xv. 4; xix. 18; xx. 20, 27. Here it seems to savour of its proper classical meaning 'to bring back tidings' to those by whom they were sent.

That God had done with them] Cf. xv. 4; xxi. 19. God is the real Doer, but He permits men to be His co-workers (1 Cor. iii. 9; 1 Thess. iii. 2, marg.)

Had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles] This was the prominent feature and greatest result of their missionary journey. Christian congregations had been formed of Gentiles

28 he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples.

who had not, in any sense, entered the church through the door of Judaism. The door of faith had superseded the door of circumcision. It was this new departure which was going to lead to such bitter controversy (xv. 1). For the simile of 'opening a door', see 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 8.

28. No little time] We may safely assign several months to their sojourn in Antioch.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XIV

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) Evangelization. vv. 1-21.
- (2) Organization. vv. 22-25.
- (3) Information. vv. 26-28.

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) Typical evangelistic experiences.
 - (a) Iconium. A fervid and divided people. vv. 1-5.
(All stirred to activity, either for or against Christ).
 - (b) Lystra. A superstitious and fickle people. vv. 8-19.
(At first ready to honour the missionaries, and then content to see them persecuted).
 - (c) Derbe. A quiet and receptive people. v. 21.
(Listening quietly to the message and accepting the Gospel).
- (2). A typical missionary address. (To superstitious pagans).
 - (a) God's unity. v. 15. (The living God, the one and true God).
 - (b) God's omnipotence. v. 15. (Who made the heaven, etc).
 - (c) God's patience. v. 16.
 - (d) God's beneficence. v. 17.
 - (e) God's invitation. v. 15. (That ye should turn, etc).
 - (f) God's Gospel. v. 15. (Bring you good tidings).

These are exactly the points which a missionary would emphasize under similar circumstances.

And certain men came down from Judæa and taught **1** the brethren, *saying*, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when **2** Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and ques-

CHAPTER XV

1-22. COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM. SPEECHES OF PETER
AND JAMES

This chapter records the waging of a new battle round the cause of Gentile liberty. The conference of chapter. xi. 1-18 had advanced that cause considerably, but the whole struggle was renewed, and that more bitterly than ever, when tidings reached the circumcision party of the foundation by St. Paul and his companions of purely Gentile churches, in which no obligation to keep the law of Moses was demanded or acknowledged. They saw, with dismay, the rise of Christian congregations entirely outside the pale of Judaism, and they strenuously opposed the movement accordingly. We have an independent account of these events in Gal. ii. 1-14, written by the apostle of the Gentiles himself.

1. Certain men] Evidently partisans of the circumcision party (xi. 2, note). They may have gone to Antioch from head-quarters on purpose to combat the new movement, which was so contrary to their convictions and wishes (Gal. ii. 4). A Bezan reading says that they were 'believers of the sect of the Pharisees'.

Taught] Imperfect tense, 'taught persistently'.

Except ye be circumcised] Here a plain issue was raised, namely, whether or no circumcision was to be regarded as essential to salvation. There were, doubtless, many members of the church of Antioch who, though attached in various degrees to Jewish teaching, were nevertheless uncircumcised (xi. 20-21, 24). And St. Paul's testimony as to the open 'door of faith' (without circumcision) in Galatia had called special attention to the subject (xiv. 27). For 'custom', see vi. 14, note.

2. Dissension] This word occurs again in xix. 40; xxiii. 7, 10; xxiv. 5. It speaks of discord and party faction.

tioning with them, *the brethren* appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And

Questioning] Also in v. 7. Cf. 1 Tim. i. 4; vi. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 23; Titus iii. 9. It shews how the position on both sides was questioned and challenged.

Appointed] The subject of the verb is not expressed, but it is clearly the congregation at Antioch. While this represents the human side of the transaction, we learn from Gal. ii. 2 that St. Paul had special directions from God Himself.

Certain other] Of whom Titus was one (Gal. ii. 1). The visit as stated in Galatians to have taken place 'after the space of fourteen years' (from St. Paul's conversion).

The apostles and elders] As the official ministers and representatives of the church at head-quarters. See xi. 1, 30, notes.

Question] A noun peculiar to the Acts (xviii. 15; xxiii. 29; xxv. 19; xxvi. 3), and cognate with the word 'questioning' in the former part of the verse. While that represents the process of questioning, this represents the question in dispute.

3. Being brought on their way] One word in the Greek, a Paulo-Lukan one, with the exception of 3 John 6. It occurs in Acts again in xx. 38; xxi. 5, interesting parallels. With true affection, a large company of the Antioch Christians accompanied them part of the way.

Phœnicia] See xi. 19, note. The work of the Hellenistic evangelists had not been in vain.

Samaria] See viii. 5, 25. There also they found the fruit of the labours of Philip, Peter, and John in the shape of congregations of brethren.

when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees 5 who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.

Declaring] 'Narrating in detail' a verb found only here and in xiii. 41.

Great joy] A favourite expression of St. Luke (Luke ii. 10; xxiv. 52; Acts viii. 8). This joy was produced from place to place (they went on causing great joy, imperfect tense), as the story of the conversion of the Gentiles was told again and again. The churches of Phoenicia and Samaria were not of the rigidly conservative type. It is interesting to notice that the noun translated 'conversion' is peculiar to this verse in the New Testament.

4. They were received] This denotes a formal reception of the delegates from Antioch by the whole church of Jerusalem, and is to be distinguished from the council which followed later (v. 6). Cf. xxi. 17.

Rehearsed all things] See xiv. 27, note.

5. Certain of the sect of the Pharisees] Their stricter training in the law and their natural religious conservatism would predispose them to resist the catholicity of the new movement (See notes on iv. 1, 5; v. 34; vi. 7; xxiii. 6). Probably, it was members of their party who had led the opposition at Antioch (v. 1). We remember with interest that St. Paul had himself been a Pharisee of the Pharisees and the companion of some of these very men.

To circumcise them] As a particular case of the general question, a battle took place, we know, over the case of Titus (Gal. ii. 3) during this visit to Jerusalem. Circumcision represented, to the conservative Hebrew, the indispensable badge of admission to the benefits of his religion, just as it does to the Muhammadan to-day. Similarly, the wearing of 'the sacred

6 And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

^{1 Gr. from early days.} Brethren, ye know how that ¹a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy

thread',—donned for the first time at the ceremony of 'Initiation' (Upanayana)—is regarded by the Hindus as the mark and badge of the 'twice-born'—and qualifies him to perform religious acts and rites.

It was, most likely, after the public reception that the private conference of leaders took place which is mentioned in Gal. ii. 2-10. This paved the way for the understanding arrived at officially in the council which follows.

6. The apostles and elders] See v. 2. A Bezan reading adds 'with the multitude'. We know, in any case, that the whole laity was represented in this important council and not the clergy only (vv. 12, 22). In this we have a model for such synods and councils in our own days.

Gathered together] See xiii. 44, note.

7. Questioning] See v. 2, note.

Peter] This is our last sight of him in the Acts. But see Gal. ii. 11. James, however, and not he, is now the recognized head of the church of Jerusalem.

A good while ago] Roughly, some ten years or so must have elapsed since the conversion of Cornelius.

8. Which knoweth the hearts] See i. 24, for the same compound word.

Giving them the Holy Ghost] An irresistible proof that He had received them (x. 47; xi. 17).

Ghost, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

9. Made no distinction] See xi. 12, from which the phrase is practically repeated. It was graven on St. Peter's mind and memory.

Cleansing their hearts by faith] In contradistinction to an external and ceremonial purification by circumcision. The verb takes us back to x. 15, where it was used as by God Himself. Inward purity, not outward ceremonialism, is the soul of true religion. We need to emphasize this fact strongly, in face of the formal and ceremonial non-Christian religions of India (Introd. VI. 7). Stress is laid on the words 'by faith'. It is by simple and sincere faith alone, the trustful acceptance of God's grace, that we receive and enjoy justification (Rom. v. 1), sanctification (xxvi. 18), and all the blessings of the Gospel.

10. Why tempt ye God] Cf. v. 9. It would be questioning and challenging God's decision to insist on the door of circumcision when He had so signally opened the 'door of faith'. We 'tempt' God when we disobey His will and seek to re-erect barriers of race and caste which He has thrown down.

A yoke] The metaphor of the yoke on the neck of the labouring bullock easily appeals to us in India. Cf. Gal. v. 1. It was frequently employed by Jewish writers. The 'yoke of the law' with all the burdensome restrictions prescribed by the later Rabbis, was a heavy one indeed. Contrast Christ's light and easy yoke (Matt. xi. 29-30). Care must be taken lest a yoke be put upon the neck of converts in lands like India, in the shape of western rules and customs, national or ecclesiastical, which are not of the essence of the Gospel. The indigenous gifts of each race and people are a treasure to be brought into the kingdom of God, not abandoned (cf. Rev. xxi. 24).

- 11 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in like manner as they.
- 12 And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by
- 13 them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying.
- 14 Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them

11. Saved through the grace, etc.] There is only one way of salvation, for Jew and Gentile alike, and for men of every race. On God's side, salvation is all of grace; on man's side, it is all by faith (Eph. ii. 8). For 'grace', see xiii. 43, note.

12. All the multitude] Shewing that a large company were present.

Kept silence] Cf. xi. 18. We may also render 'became silent', the contentions of the opposition party being stilled. Cf. v. 13.

Hearkened] Imperfect tense, 'they gave a continuous hearing to' the missionaries.

Rehearsing] See x. 8, note.

Signs and wonders] See ii. 22, note. Cf. xiv. 3. They were the divine credentials to the new movement.

God had wrought] Cf. v. 4; xiv. 27. Stress is laid on the fact that God Himself was the leader and worker in the new enterprise.

By them] As the human instruments. In v. 4, it was 'with them', as the human co-workers.

13. James] See xii. 17, note. He appears here as president of the council.

14. Symeon] The original Hebrew form of the Graecized name Simon (see xiii. 1. Cf. 2 Pet. i. 1, margin).

Rehearsed] See v. 12; x. 8.

a people for his name. And to this agree the words 15
of the prophets; as it is written,

After these things I will return, 16

First] That is, 'in the beginning' (of this new departure).
Cf. v. 7.

Did visit] God's special visitations may be either in judgment or in mercy. In the New Testament, the word appears to be invariably used of God in the latter sense (Luke i. 68, 78; vii. 16; xix. 44; Heb. ii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 12).

To take out of them a people] The word for 'people' is the one specially used of the Jews as God's chosen nation (x. 2, note). Christian converts from among the Gentiles are now included under the same term, shewing that God has abolished all racial distinctions in His kingdom, and broadened the word '(chosen) people' to embrace the universal Church.

God is still taking out from the nations a people for His name, that is for Himself, to bear His name. We see this process going on throughout the world, including India and Ceylon. ♪

15. Agree] For this verb, see Matt. xviii. 19; xx. 2. 13; Luke v. 36; chapter v. 9. The prophetic Scriptures are 'of one voice' with the statements of St. Peter and St. James.

The words of the prophets] In general. He then quotes, in particular, from Amos ix. 11-12, LXX, freely in some parts (vv. 16, 18), but verbatim in the part relating to the Gentiles (v. 17). A reference to the original passage in Amos will shew that the prophet referred specially to the possession, by the chosen race, of Edom and the other Gentile nations. The Greek translators, by rendering Adam (man) for Edom, through the change of a single letter, interpreted the passage as we have it in the text. The Jews understood the prophecy to be Messianic, and had called the Messiah, in consequence, 'Bar Naphli', 'the son of the fallen'.

16. After these things] Some understand these words to mean 'in the Christian dispensation'. Others see in them a dispensational time note, (a) the gathering out of the Church in this

And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen ;

And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up :

17 That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,
And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,

18 Saith the Lord, ¹ who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world. 1 Or, who doeth these things which were known

19 Wherefore my judgement is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God ;

age, (b) 'after these things' the conversion of the Jews, leading (c) to the ingathering of 'all the Gentiles'.

Build again] A compound verb peculiar to this verse. The emphasis on the restoration of God's ancient people is shewn by the conjunction of four compound verbs all having the same prefix meaning 'up' or 'again' (I will turn again ; I will build again ; I will erect again).

The tabernacle of David] Meaning 'the Jewish nation'. The word rendered 'tabernacle' (tent), when referred to the original word used by Amos (booth or hut), signifies a poor and temporary abode like the booths used in the Feast of Tabernacles, in contrast to a kingly palace. It thus points to the dilapidated condition into which the chosen nation had fallen. }

Set it up] Or 'erect it again', a verb used again only in Luke xiii. 13 ; Heb. xii. 12.

17. **Upon whom My name is called]** Cf. Jas. ii. 7, margin. A Hebraism (Dent. xxviii. 10 ; Isa. lxiii. 19 ; Jer. xiv. 9 ; etc.), meaning 'who bear My name (as being My people)'.

19. **My judgement is]** Literally 'I decide', the personal pronoun being emphatic. St. James gives his personal vote and judgment, so to speak. He evidently speaks, too, with some authority.

but that we ¹ write unto them, that they ¹ Or, *enjoin* 20
 abstain from the pollutions of idols, and ^{them}
 from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from

Trouble not] The verb is peculiar to this verse, and means 'to annoy anyone by putting obstacles in his way'. We have to beware lest we place needless impediments in the way of actual or would-be converts in the mission field.

Turn to God] Cf. ix. 35; xiv. 15; xxvi. 20. Present participle, 'are turning to God', as of a movement then in progress.

20. Write] Margin 'enjoin'. This verb, which occurs again only in xxi. 25; Heb. xiii. 22, means, primarily, 'to send (instructions) by a messenger'; but it is often used in the sense of 'to send a letter', our own word epistle being derived from it. Render 'send written instructions'.

The pollutions of idols] Meaning 'things sacrificed to idols' (v. 29). Cf. xxi. 25; 1 Cor. viii. 1, 4, 7, 10; x. 19; Rev. ii. 14, 20. In a country like our own, where food which has been presented to idols is regarded as conveying special merit when partaken of, we know from experience what necessity lies on converts to abstain from it as a witness to their faith. Very often, the first real stand for Christ taken publicly by inquirers in Hindu homes is on this very matter. The word rendered 'pollutions' is peculiar to this verse.

Fornication] Idolatry and fornication often went together in Greece and Rome; and it is so, largely, in India too. We need only remember the fact that there are thousands of women in this land who have been dedicated to the temples and who live a life of avowed prostitution which is carried on under the sanctions of religion. Saktism, or the worship of force personified as a goddess, countenances among its rites or orgies unmentionable abominations. The employment of dancing girls in connexion with Hindu weddings and festivals certainly encourages immorality. Hindu social reformers acknowledge and deplore these evils. The state of pagan society in the Roman empire was shockingly immoral, and it was incumbent on Christians

21 blood. For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath.

of that age, as it is the duty of Indian Christians to-day, to witness against all such evils by a pure and holy life.

What is strangled] A word peculiar to this chapter and xxi. 25. The Jews were forbidden by their law to eat the flesh of any animal from which the blood had not been let out (Lev. xvii. 13), since the latter was considered sacred to God. Things 'strangled' would, of course, come under that prohibition. There is a natural feeling, which is allied to this, against eating animals which die of themselves. The Bezan text omits 'what is strangled', inserting instead, after 'from blood', the words 'and not to do to others whatsoever things they would not have done to themselves'.

Blood] This, from the time when animal food was first permitted to man, was strictly prohibited (Gen. ix. 4), the prohibition being enforced and emphasized by the law of Moses (Lev. iii. 17; xvii. 10-14; Deut. xii. 16, 23). If we examine the four points specified, we see that they relate to *idolatry*, *impurity*, and *indulgence in questionable meats* (as the Jew, at least, considered them). It was just such things which, apart from circumcision, made the Gentile offensive to the Jew and so rendered intercourse between them well nigh impossible. St. James's fourfold prohibition was clearly intended to form a basis of agreement between the two parties. Many consider that it was of the nature of a compromise, intended to meet temporary conditions (1 Cor. viii. 1-13). Such compromise on lesser questions, when once the main principle (in this case the circumcision test) is conceded, is in accordance with the Christian law of love. But compromise, when a main principle (such as the 'caste' or 'colour' question) is *not* conceded, is wrong and unchristian.

21. **Moses]** That is, 'the Mosaic law'.

In every city] Where there was a synagogue. For 'synagogue', see vi. 9, note. We may understand this verse as meaning

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, **22** with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas,

either that there was no fear that the law of Moses would be entirely forsaken, since it was regularly taught in the synagogues of the dispersion; or, that, since the precepts of the law of Moses were everywhere diligently inculcated, Gentile Christians must be careful not to offend the prejudices of their Jewish fellow-believers in these four particulars.

22. With the whole church] Of which the apostles and presbyters were the officers and ministers. See v. 6, note.

Antioch] Where the controversy had first arisen (v. 1).

Judas called Barsabbas] We know nothing further of him. Since Barsabbas was also a surname of Joseph (i. 23, which see), the two may possibly have been brothers.

Silas] An abbreviated form of Silvanus. After performing his special mission in Antioch (vv. 30-5), he accompanied St. Paul, in place of Barnabas, on his second missionary journey (v. 40) through Syria, Cilicia, south Galatia, and the Troad to Macedonia. He remained in Beroea with Timothy after St. Paul's departure to Athens (xvii. 14), but seems to have followed his leader to Athens later (xvii. 15), only, however, to be sent back to Macedonia, like Timothy, on some special errand (1 Thess. iii. 1. 2). He rejoined St. Paul at Corinth (xviii. 5), and his name is associated with the apostle's in the two Epistles written to the Thessalonians from that city. Here we lose sight of him, so far as St. Paul's further labours are concerned. It is generally supposed, however, that he is identical with the Silvanus mentioned in 1 Pet. v. 12, as the bearer of St. Peter's first Epistle. Like Paul, he was a Roman citizen (xvi. 37).)

Chief men among the brethren] That is, they were persons of importance and influence in the church of Jerusalem (cf. v. 32).

- 23 chief men among the brethren : and they wrote *thus* by them, The apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and
- 24 Syria and Cilicia, greeting : Forasmuch as we have heard that certain ¹ which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls ; to whom we gave no commandment ;

1 Some ancient authorities omit which went out.

23-34. CONCILIAR LETTER TO THE GENTILE CHURCHES

23. The elder brethren] Some ancient authorities read 'the elders *and the* brethren', which is what we should naturally expect ; but the preponderance of MSS. evidence is against the words 'and the'. Even so, the word 'brethren' may be regarded as in apposition to the word 'elders', and the verse may be rendered 'the apostles and elders, brethren'. Blass, Ramsay, and others would omit the word 'brethren' altogether as a gloss, and read simply 'the apostles and elders'.

Antioch, Syria and Cilicia] Which were all in the Roman province of Syria. The present controversy, while it affected the Gentiles generally, was confined, at that juncture, to the Syrian churches. We notice, here, fruit from St. Paul's former labours (Gal. i. 21).

24. Troubled] Cf. Gal. i. 7 ; v. 10. 'Disturbed'. The verb of v. 19 is different. It was characteristic of Judaizing teachers to disturb the churches.

Subverting] A verb peculiar to this verse. It means 'to dismantle', 'to devastate'. The circumcision teachers would strip uncircumcised Christians of their salvation.

We gave no commandment] The church of Jerusalem thus repudiates the unbrotherly actions of the circumcision emissaries.

25. To one accord] See i. 14, note.

Beloved] An adjective frequent in the Epistles but not found elsewhere in the Acts. It is used of St. Paul again in 2 Peter

it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to 25
 choose out men and send them unto you with our
 beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded 26
 their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who them- 27
 selves also shall tell you the same things by word of
 mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and 28
 to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than
 these necessary things; that ye abstain from things 29

iii. 15, an interesting parallel. Such a term of affection was calculated to dispel any feeling of resentment caused in Antioch by the controversy. It was a particular way, too, of giving Paul and Barnabas 'the right hand of fellowship' (Gal. ii. 9). Barnabas is here naturally placed before Paul.

26. Have hazarded their lives] Cf. Dan. iii. 28 LXX. The verb means literally 'handed over (their lives) to'. The Bezan text completes the sentence by adding 'unto every temptation'. It refers, specially, to the dangers and risks which they had voluntarily encountered during their recent missionary journey.

27. The same things] As are briefly indicated in the letter.

28. To the Holy Ghost] His presence and guidance at the council are thus recognized and acknowledged. Not James, but He, was the real president. All through the Acts, He is represented as directing the counsels and operations of His people. Cf. i. 2; v. 3, 9, 32; viii. 29; x. 19; xiii. 2, 4; and see *Introd.* VI, 1.

Burden] The reference being to v. 10, with its metaphor of the 'yoke'. Cf. Rev. ii. 24, which possibly refers to the same decree. The same word also occurs in Gal. vi. 2, an interesting reference.

Necessary things] A word found only here; 'necessary', that is, on the principle of Rom. xiv. 15-23.

sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

- 30 So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together,
 31 they delivered the epistle. And when they had read
 32 it, they rejoiced for the ¹ consolation. And ¹ Or, exhortation
 Judas and Silas, being themselves also

29 Things sacrificed to idols, etc.] See v. 20, note. The prohibited things are here arranged in a different order, so that those relating to food are all placed together first, and 'fornication' comes last. The Bezan text, in conformity with its reading of v. 20, omits 'from things strangled' and adds, after 'fornication', the words 'and what things ye would not should be done to yourselves do not to others'.

Keep yourselves] The verb, found again only in Luke ii. 51, is intensive in meaning, 'keep yourselves carefully and thoroughly'. Cf. Jas. i. 27.

It shall be well] That is, 'ye shall fare well', by the prevalence of Christian love and unity. The Bezan text adds 'going on in the Holy Ghost'.

30. When they were dismissed] See xiii. 3, note, for the same verb (sent them away). It speaks of a valedictory farewell by the church of Jerusalem.

Having gathered . . . together] See xiii. 44, note.

The multitude] That is, the whole church (cf. v. 12).

31. They rejoiced] St. Luke loves to emphasize Christian gladness (Introd. VI. 9).

For the consolation] See iv. 36; ix. 31, notes. The letter, with its good news of peace and liberty, cheered, encouraged, and comforted them.

prophets, ¹ exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. And after they had spent some time *there*, they were dismissed in peace from the brethren unto those that had sent them forth.² But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

¹ Or, *comforted*

² Some ancient authorities insert, with variations, ver. 34 *But it seemed good unto Silas to abide there.*

33

35

32. Prophets] See xi. 27, note. We see, therefore, that the delegates possessed special ministerial gifts. After 'prophets', the Bezan text has 'full of the Holy Ghost'.

Exhorted] Margin, 'comforted', the verb corresponding with the noun 'consolation' of v. 31. Cf. xi. 23; xiv. 22. Judas and Silas did much, by their words of exhortation and encouragement, to promote the cheer and consolation which ensued on the reading of the letter. We notice that their gift of prophecy took the form of messages of encouragement, not that of prediction as in the case of Agabus.

Confirmed] See xiv. 22, note.

33. Were dismissed] See xiii. 3; v. 30. 'They were bade farewell to and given permission to depart'. Most of the oldest MSS. (see margin) omit v. 34, 'But it seemed good to Silas to abide there'. In that case, it must remain doubtful whether Silas actually remained behind at Antioch, or whether he re-joined Paul from Jerusalem at a later date (v. 40). Ramsay and others, however, stoutly defend the genuineness of the verse, which is found in various ancient authorities. To make the story complete, the Bezan text adds also 'and Judas went alone', back to Jerusalem.

35-38. DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS

35. Tarried] This verb occurs again in xii. 19; xiv. 3, 28; xvi. 12; xx. 6; xxv. 6, 14. A considerable period seems to be intended. To this period must be referred the incidents of Peter's vacillating conduct and Barnabas' compromising

36 And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how
 37 they fare. And Barnabas was minded to take with them
 38 John also, who was called Mark. But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

actions related in Gal. ii. 11-18. Doubtless, it prepared the way for the breach which follows (vv. 39. 40).

36. After some days] The phrase is indefinite, though it usually denotes a comparatively short period (ix. 19). We do not even know from what epoch it is calculated, whether from the arrival of the conciliar letter, or from St. Peter's slip, or from some other event.

Visit the brethren] Cf. vii. 23, note. All through his life, St. Paul shewed a tender solicitude for the welfare of the newly-founded churches (2 Cor. xi. 28).

37. Was minded] Cf. ch. v. 33, note. The imperfect tense suggests that Barnabas persisted in his wish and intention.

To take with them] See xii. 25, for the same compound verb.

John who was called Mark] See xii. 12, note. Barnabas shewed strong partiality to a near relative (Col. iv. 10). We need to be on our guard, in Christian work in India, lest we allow family interests to mar our conscientious performance of God's work. It requires real moral courage to refuse the application of unsuitable relatives for posts of labour in Christian missions.

38. Withdrew from them] The Greek verb means almost that he 'fell away from them' like an apostate to the missionary cause (cf. 1 Tim. iv. 1). St. Paul regarded John Mark's departure as a base desertion.

Went not with them to the work] That is, 'the work of evangelizing the Gentiles' (see xiii. 13, note).

And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren

39. A sharp contention] The noun so rendered (paroxysm) occurs again only, and that in a different sense, in Heb. x. 24 (provoking); but the cognate verb is found in xvii. 16; 1 Cor. xiii. 5. It denotes strong 'exasperation'. This warm contention by two earnest missionaries over an unsatisfactory worker is a sad picture, but great principles were at stake, and Paul dared not yield. Christian missionaries, whether Indian or European, will do well to learn the lesson and to avoid partiality. We are glad to know that no personal resentment was allowed to rankle in their hearts (1 Cor. ix. 6), and that in later days Mark returned to work with Paul and was accepted by him.

Sailed away] See xiii. 4, note.

Unto Cyprus] His native country (iv. 36), and the scene of the first missionary operations during the previous tour (xiii. 4). Here Barnabas passes from our view. He turned aside, so to speak, from the main line of evangelistic operations, and so St. Luke is concerned with him no longer.

2. Second Missiary Journey. xv. 40—xviii. 22

This second journey is chiefly concerned with missionary operations in eastern Europe, in the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. After revisiting the churches previously founded in Syria and South Galatia, the evangelists were led by the Holy Spirit, almost against their will, viâ Troas, to Macedonia, and thence to Greece. They founded new congregations in Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, and Corinth. St. Paul then returned to Syrian Antioch, visiting Ephesus by the way.

40, 41. CHURCHES REVISITED IN SYRIA AND CILICIA

40. Chose Silas] He had doubtless seen in him, during his stay in Antioch, special qualifications for work among the Gentiles. Like St. Paul, he was both a born Hebrew and a Roman citizen, and so was specially fitted for the enterprise awaiting

41 to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

him. His preaching power had been approved, as also his liberal spirit (v. 32). If he were at Antioch, as is probable, during the Cephas episode of Gal. ii. 11-18, we may be sure that he took, with Paul, the side of Gentile liberty.

Being commanded by the brethren to the grace, etc.] Cf. xiv. 26. We conclude that the church of Antioch was in full sympathy with St. Paul in the steps he was now taking, and wholeheartedly accepted his position of complete equality within the Church. How critical that position was about this time and how nearly it was lost may be seen from Gal. ii. 11-18.

41. Went through] An itinerating tour by land (viii. 4, note). St. Paul thus revisited congregations which he had most likely been instrumental in founding before his connexion with Antioch began (Gal. i. 21). The circumcision question had been raised there also (v. 23), and this visit was intended to cheer the brethren there.

Confirming] See xiv. 22, note. The Bezan text adds, 'delivering the commandments of the (apostles and) presbyters'.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XV

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) The controversy. vv. 1-5. (Circumcision or faith?).
- (2) The council. vv. 6-21.
- (3) The conclusion. vv. 22-9.
- (4) The consolation. vv. 30-5.
- (5) The contention. vv. 36-41. (With its consequences).

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) A typical council.
 - (a) Its divine Head. v. 28. (The Holy Ghost recognized as president).
 - (b) Its rule of faith. vv. 15-18. (The word of God accepted as authoritative).
 - (c) Its teachable spirit. vv. 7-12. (Readiness to appreciate God's hand in events).
 - (d) Its simple creed. v. 11.

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess which believed; but his father was a

- (e) Its liberal decrees. vv. 19-21.
- (f) Its perfect unanimity. v. 22.
- (2) A typical letter (synodical).
 - (a) Its bearers. vv. 22, 27, 32. (Men of approved character).
 - (b) Its brotherly greeting. v. 23.
 - (c) Its generous spirit. vv. 24-6.
 - (d) Its liberal message. vv. 28-9.
 - (e) Its good effect. vv. 30-2.

CHAPTER XVI

1-4. CHURCHES REVISITED. S. GALATIA. TIMOTHY

1. Came] Or 'arrived at', a Paulo-Lukan verb (xviii. 19, 24; xx. 15; xxi. 7; xxv. 13; xxvi. 7; xxvii. 12; xxviii. 13; 1 Cor. x. 11; xiv. 36; Eph. iv. 13; Phil. iii. 11). Its frequent occurrence in the latter part of the Acts is remarkable.

Derbe and Lystra] See xiv. 6, note. Thus St. Paul passed by land from the Roman province of Syria-Cilicia, through 'the Cilician gates' (a famous pass of Mt. Taurus), into the 'Galatic region' (Galatica Lycaonia) of the province of Galatia, in which 'region' these two cities were situated.

Behold] An exclamation of glad surprise. God had provided a fresh companion for His servant. Cf. i. 10; vii. 56; viii. 27; ix. 11; x. 17, 19, 21, 30; xii. 7; xxvii. 24.

There] At Lystra, the place of Timothy's birth and residence.

Timothy] Converted, we may well believe, during St. Paul's former visit to Lystra (cf. 2 Tim. iii. 10-11 and 1 Tim. i. 2, with Acts xiv. 19-20). We find him, in this chapter, accompanying the apostle to Philippi (vv. 6-12). He also assisted in the work at Thessalonica (xvii. 1-9; 1 Thess. i. 1), and at Beroea (xvii. 10-14), where he remained behind with Silas to strengthen the church, rejoining St. Paul late at Athens

2 Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren
3 that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul

(xvii. 15),—only, however, to be despatched again on a mission to Thessalonica (1 Thess. iii. 1, 2). He rejoined his chief once more at Corinth (xviii. 5), and there we lose sight of him till we find him with Paul at Ephesus during the third missionary journey (xix. 22), from whence he was sent with Erastus and others to Macedonia (1 Cor. xvi. 10–11), with the intention of going on to Corinth (1 Cor. iv. 17). He is still in Macedonia, however, with St. Paul when 2 Corinthians is written (2 Cor. i. 1); and, in his company, goes on to Corinth (Rom. xvi. 21). He continued with the apostle on the return journey, at least as far as Troas (xx. 1–5). There is no further mention of him till we find him with St. Paul at Rome during the latter's first imprisonment there (Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; Philem. 1), about to be sent on a special errand to Philippi (Phil. ii. 19–24). After his release, St. Paul placed him in charge of the church at Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 3), and we see him once more in 2 Tim. iv. 9, 21, summoned to come to Rome as speedily as possible during the apostle's second imprisonment there. There is one other allusion to him, in Heb. xiii. 23.

A Jewess which believed] That is, a Christian Jewess. Some texts add, 'a widow'. Her name was Eunice, and her mother's name Lois (2 Tim. i. 5). St. Paul's former visit to Lystra had brought light and salvation to that family.

His father was a Greek] Whether alive or dead at the time, we cannot certainly say. For 'Greek' see xiv. 1, note. Even though he may have been a 'devout Greek', he was not a circumcised proselyte (v. 3). Thus Timothy was the offspring of a mixed marriage, and the blood of Asia and Europe probably flowed mingled in his veins. If so, we may regard him, from an Indian standpoint, as a Eurasian, a pattern of faith and zeal to all the members of that important community.

2. Well reported of] Cf. vi. 3. This point is strongly emphasized in the New Testament as essential for Christian workers.

have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek. And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, which had been

Lystra and Iconium] Derbe is not mentioned. Though Derbe and Lystra were in the same political region, while Iconium lay in a different one, yet Lystra was much nearer to Iconium than to Derbe (xiv. 6, note), and the two cities were closely connected by commerce and intercourse.

3. Would Paul have] 'Paul wished', spontaneously. He felt strongly drawn to the young convert, and his personal affection for him only grew stronger as the years went by.

Circumcised him] On the principle of expediency (1 Cor. vi. 12). He had resisted the proposed circumcision of Titus (Gal. ii. 3-5), because the rite was then claimed as essential to salvation (xv. 1). Now, however, as the bearer of the conciliar letter of Gentile liberty (v. 4), he carried clear evidence that such a tenet had been officially repudiated, and he could afford to circumcise Timothy without danger of being misunderstood. In order to prevent needless friction with Jewish communities along his line of travel, he deemed it expedient, especially since Timothy was half-a-Jew by birth, to remove any unnecessary ground of offence (1 Cor. ix. 20), now that no vital principle was involved in his action. Apparently, the Judaising teachers tried to make capital out of his action at a later date and to accuse him, though most unfairly, of inconsistency (Gal. i. 8-10; v. 11).

We may fairly place Timothy's ordination also here (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6, 7).

4. As they went on their way] From Lystra, through the Phrygian region of the province of Galatia (see xiii. 49, note), which they would enter after leaving that town, according to St. Paul's original plan of revisiting the churches (xv. 36).

Through the cities] In particular, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch.

ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to

The decrees] That is, the decisions of the council of Jerusalem (xv. 23-9).

5. Were strengthened] See iii. 7, 16, notes, for the same verb. The tense indicates a continuous increase of strength and steadfastness.

Increased in number] Here also a continual process is in view.

In accordance with St. Luke's style, we see that he is here concluding, so to speak, another period of missionary work, preparatory to a new departure (cf. vi. 7; ix. 31; xii. 24).

6-10. JOURNEY TO TROAS. VISION

6. They went through] 'They itinerated through' (viii. 4, note). This, apparently, sums up, so to speak, the tour already referred to (vv. 4, 5), namely, that through the Phrygian region of the province of Galatia, of which Pisidian Antioch was the political centre (xiii. 49). Some manuscripts read 'having gone through', and the English A. V. followed these by rendering 'when they had gone throughout'. Ramsay and others argue for this reading, in spite of the adverse evidence of the greater manuscripts.

The region of Phrygia and Galatia] This translation follows the North Galatian theory (Chapter xiii. introductory remarks), which requires us to suppose that, on leaving Pisidian Antioch, the missionaries were prevented from entering the province of Asia and turned first north through Phrygia and then back eastwards for nearly two hundred miles into North Galatia. It is then taken for granted that St. Paul was detained there by sickness and founded churches at Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus, places not anywhere mentioned in the New Testament by name. But it would be strange indeed if St. Luke were to omit to describe the foundation of so important a work, and

speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and

if such a curious detour were made during the journey. Moreover, the rendering of the text is open to serious question. More literally translated, it runs 'the Phrygian and Galatic region', i. e. 'the region that is (geographically) Phrygian and (politically) Galatic'; in other words, the Phrygio-Galatic region, or the Phrygian region of the province of Galatia. On crossing the frontier border of this region, the travellers would immediately enter the Roman province of Asia.

Having been forbidden] Render, rather, 'and were prevented'. For a similar construction (aorist verb followed by a participle, denoting two successive actions), see xxii. 24; xxiii. 34, 35; xxiv. 22; xxv. 13. On crossing the border of the province of Galatia, they were prevented by the Spirit from preaching in the province of Asia, which they would, naturally, have proceeded, otherwise, to evangelize. /

To speak the word in Asia] Apparently, they had contemplated an evangelistic campaign in the province of Asia (see ii. 9, note), with Ephesus, the chief city, as their objective. The Holy Spirit, however, 'prevented' their preaching as they had intended, probably by some direct indication of His will (cf. viii. 29; x. 19), though He did not forbid their travelling through part of Asia. The missionaries, therefore, instead of following the highroad west to Ephesus, must have travelled north-north-west through Asian Phrygia, i. e. through that part of Phrygia which was included in the province of Asia. This would bring them to the situation described in the next verse.

7. Over against Mysia] A district in the north-west part of Asia Minor bordering on the Hellespont and the Propontis, and included in the Roman province of Asia (ii. 9, note). The missionaries travelled mainly in a northerly direction till they arrived 'opposite to Mysia', on the border of the Asian province, with the intention of entering the province of Bithynia. They were, at that juncture, almost due east of Troas.

8 the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by
9 Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision

They assayed] 'They kept attempting' (imperfect tense). They persisted for some time, it would seem, in their endeavour.

Bithynia] That is, the Roman province of that name (Bithynia-Pontus, ii. 9, note). It lay north-east of Asia and north-west of Galatia, on the borders of the Propontis and the Black Sea. It is mentioned again in 1:Pet. i. 1. A Roman road ran into it from Asian Phrygia, which the missionaries must have been following. So far as we know, St. Paul never preached in Bithynia.

The Spirit of Jesus] An expression peculiar to this verse. It was the Spirit of Jesus, the Saviour, who was yearning over the souls of men 'unto the uttermost part of the earth' (i. 8) which would not suffer them to confine their work to Asia Minor but hastened their steps towards Europe and the 'regions beyond'.

The evangelists were carried on, against their personal wishes and intentions, further and further afield. God's love and purposes were wider than theirs. Let us learn the lesson in view of the unoccupied fields of India.

8. Passing by Mysia] This cannot mean, 'passing by without entering', for Troas was a city of Mysia, and that town was now their immediate destination. They had not been forbidden to enter the province of Asia, as they had been forbidden to enter that of Bithynia, but only prohibited from preaching in it (v. 6). We may therefore render either 'passing alongside Mysia' i. e. skirting it; or (with Ramsay), 'neglecting Mysia', passing through it without preaching (cf. Luke xi. 42; xv. 29, for the same verb). Thus they turned westward, towards the sea coast.

Troas] Or, more fully, 'Alexandria Troas', a city of Mysia on the Aegean coast, opposite the island of Tenedos. The district surrounding it bore the same name, but was commonly known as 'the Troad'. Antigonos built a city there, near the site of the ancient Troy, but it was refounded in 300 B. C. by

appeared to Paul in the night; There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had 10 seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Lysimachus and named 'Alexandria Troas' after Alexander the Great. It passed into Roman hands in 133 B.C. and Augustus made it a Roman colony. We read of it again in xx. 5, 6; 2 Cor. ii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 13. Arrived there, the missionaries had the Aegean sea before them, with Europe awaiting them beyond. They were not left long in doubt as to God's will.

9. A vision] See vii. 31, note.

A man of Macedonia] The Macedonians were akin to the Greeks, but more hardy and less civilized. Their country was a region in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula. Under Philip (360-336 B.C.) and his son Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.) they became the predominant power and conquered the Persian empire, carrying their victorious arms east as far as India. They were finally subjugated by Rome, and in 147 B.C. Macedonia was formed into a province of the empire, including portions of Illyria and Thessaly. Its capital was Thessalonica (xvii. 1).

Ramsay thinks that the 'man of Macedonia' was St. Luke himself, who appears on the scene at Troas. 'With his view turned onwards, he (Paul) slept, and beheld in a vision his Macedonian acquaintance beckoning him onward to his own country.' This, of course, is a mere conjecture, as we do not know that St. Luke was a Macedonian.

10. Straightway] After the prohibitions of vv. 6, 7, this new opening was seized with alacrity. At last, God's purpose in their journey was becoming clear.

We] Here St. Luke, the author, appears for the first time (Introd. II). He was possibly brought into contact with St. Paul in a medical capacity. This is the commencement of the 'we' sections (Introd. I. p. xii.)

- 11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis ;
 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedo-

Concluding] For the verb so translated, see ix. 22, note (' proving '). When they put side by side the strange providential leadings (vv. 6-8), the special call of the vision, and their strong inward convictions of God's will, they were quite sure in their conclusion that He would have them cross to Macedonia.

11-40. PHILIPPI

11. **Setting sail]** See xiii. 13, note.

Made a straight course] Another of St. Luke's nautical phrases, 'we sailed before the wind'. The verb occurs again only in xxi. 1. No tacking was required. Wind and sea helped their progress on this occasion. The crossing in an opposite direction took much longer on St. Paul's return from his third journey (xx. 6).

Samothrace] An island north-west of Troas, and south of the coast of Thrace. It is mountainous in character, and was formerly famous for the mysterious worship of the Cabiri (pagan deities). It lay, roughly, half way between Troas and Neapolis, and St. Paul's ship anchored there for the night *en route*, probably at the north extremity of the island, where the chief town was situated.

Neapolis] Meaning 'new city'. It was the seaport of Philippi and was situated at the northern end of the Aegean sea. Its distance from Samothrace was about thirty miles. It is usually identified with the modern town of Kavalla.

12. **Philippi]** A city founded on the site of an earlier town (Crenides) by Philip of Macedonia in the fourth century B.C. and called by his name. It lay on the great Egnatian Road, just at the spot where the chain of the Balkan Mountains sinks into a pass. After it had passed into Roman hands, Augustus made it a Roman colony, with the title of 'Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis', to commemorate his victory there over

nia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. And on the 13 sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river

Brutus and Cassius (42 B.C.) It was about ten miles inland from Neapolis, a ridge of elevated land being crossed by the Egnatian Road between the two. We read of it again in xx. 6; Phil. i. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 2.

The first of the district] (1) Some interpret this geographically, 'the first city of Macedonia to be reached on St. Paul's line of route' (Neapolis being usually regarded as belonging to Thrace, not Macedonia).

(2) Others, in view of the order of the Greek, in which the words city and colony are side by side, render 'the first (i. e. chief) colony-city of that part of Macedonia'.

(3) Others, again, understanding the words to be used of its political importance, interpret them as meaning 'the first city in importance of that district of Macedonia'. The province was divided into four parts about 168 B.C. Philippi lay in the part which comprised the district east of the Strymon river. Amphipolis (xvii. 1) was the real capital of that district; but Philippi, it is claimed by the advocates of this interpretation, was the rival of Amphipolis and asserted a precedence which was afterwards actually obtained.

Of these interpretations, the first seems the most natural and the least ambiguous.

Colony] As such, it enjoyed special privileges, amongst others the 'Jus Italicum' or immunity from the ground tax levied by the Romans on all provincial lands. Its magistrates bore titles borrowed from the imperial city; and its laws, coinage and official language were all Latin. Its colonial features and dignities are clearly reflected in the Epistle to the Philippians (i. 27, margin; iii. 20).

Certain days] Apparently, they arrived there early in the week, and waited for the ensuing Sabbath before commencing active operations.

13. Without the gate] Jews were not numerous in a military centre like Philippi, and so there was no synagogue in the town.

side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which
14 were come together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken

By a river side] The river Gangites, a tributary of the Strymon. It flowed about a mile west of the city. The Jews often preferred the sea side or a river bank for purposes of worship, because of the need of water for their ceremonial purifications.

We supposed] Imperfect tense, 'we continued under the impression'. Perhaps they had seen indications of it from a distance.

A place of prayer] A 'proseucha' or 'prayer-house'. It may have consisted of a simple walled enclosure. Both Josephus and Philo mention such unpretentious places of gathering for worship.

Women] Even these were not all Jewesses by birth (v. 14). There is no mention of men, and we gather that Jews must have been very few in number in Philippi. Women occupied an important position in Macedonia, as inscriptions clearly shew; and they played a considerable part in the foundation of the churches there (xvii. 4, 12). It is characteristic of St. Luke to call special attention to them.

14. Lydia] Since she came from a city in the country of Lydia, she may have received this name, as a popular appellation in Philippi, to mark the fact, 'the Lydian'. At the same time, Lydia was not an uncommon female name and may have been her proper name. We gather, from the context, that she was a widow.

A seller of purple] One word in the Greek, a compound noun. The country of Lydia in general, and Thyatira in particular, were noted for purple dyeing. Inscriptions shew that there was

by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her house-¹⁵ hold, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

a guild of dyers there. It was such purple-dyed garments, etc., which Lydia sold in Philippi. She had clearly settled there for trade purposes, and, engaged in such a business, must have been well-to-do.

Thyatira] A rich city in the north of Lydia, a country included in the province of Asia and south of Mysia. It lay in the valley of the river Lycus, having been refounded by Seleucus Nicator during the third century B. C. It owed its prosperity chiefly to commerce, and the dyeing trade there, in particular, was flourishing. One of the 'seven churches of Asia' was afterwards founded there (Rev. i. 11).

One that worshipped God] An external adherent of Judaism (xiii. 43, note). There were Jewish settlers in Thyatira, and she may have become a worshipper of the true God there.

Heard] The imperfect tense points to her sustained attention. It may mean that she became a regular hearer, as we need not necessarily suppose that her conversion and baptism occurred immediately, on the very first Sabbath.

The Lord opened] The verb is a compound one, 'completely opened'. It is used of

- (a) Completely opening the ears. Mark vii. 34-5.
- (b) " " eyes. Luke xxiv. 31.
- (c) " " Scriptures. Luke xxiv. 32.
Acts xvii. 3.
- (d) " " mind. Luke xxiv. 45.
- (e) " " heart. Acts xvi. 14.

(See also Luke ii. 23; Acts vii. 56).

As she 'continued hearing' in sincerity, God opened her heart to receive His saving truth.

To give heed] See viii. 6, for a similar expression.

15. When she was baptised] See ii. 38, note; and cf. viii. 12, 36.

16 And it came to pass, as we were going to the place
 of prayer, that a certain maid having ^{1 a} spirit of divination met us, which brought
^{1 Gr. a spirit, a Python.}
 17 her masters much gain by sooth-saying. The same

And her household] Cf. x. 2; vv. 33-4; xviii. 8. We cannot actually prove that any of these households comprised little children as well as adults, but the probability is that one or other of them did. The influence of the head of a household in spiritual things is, in any case, sufficiently clear. Blessings come to whole families through the sincere faith of their heads. This is an important fact in India, where family and clan ties are specially strong. One man can often induce an entire village to put themselves under Christian instruction.

Faithful to the Lord] Meaning also, 'one who believes in the Lord' (cf. v. 1, where the same Greek adjective is used).

My house] She was in prosperous circumstances, and had a house of considerable size. That house became the first meeting place of the Philippian church (v. 40). Lydia set a good example of liberality, and the Philippian church continually followed it (Phil. i. 5; iv. 10-19).

Constrained] A Lukan verb, occurring again only in Luke xxiv. 29, an interesting parallel. It expresses almost forcible urgency. Possibly, the missionaries shewed a natural reluctance to impose on her generosity, but she would not be gainsaid and her pressure won the day.

16. **The place of prayer]** See v. 13, note.

Having a spirit of divination] Literally as in margin, 'a spirit, a python'. Python was the name of a great dragon at Delphi which was slain, according to Greek mythology, by Apollo who received, in consequence, the title 'Pythius' and was supposed to inherit its oracular power. This slave girl was possibly regarded as inspired by the Pythian Apollo, and credited with powers of divination. It should be added that evidence is adduced from Plutarch and others to shew that ventriloquists were called 'Pythons', ventriloquism being attributed to powers

following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are ¹servants of the Most High God, which ^{1 Gr. bond-servants.} proclaim unto you ²the way of salvation. ^{2 Or, a way}

of magic, or demon possession. The girl may, therefore, have been a ventriloquist credited also with the gift of divination, —considered due to her being possessed by a god or demon. In India and Ceylon, we have, especially in connexion with demon worship, a large number of persons who, particularly when dancing before temples or shrines, sink exhausted after a frenzy of excitement into a sort of trance, and are considered to have received the inflatus of the spirit whom they worship and to be gifted with clairvoyance and the power of uttering certain predictions. Thousands of people consult such possessed media as to recovery from sickness, etc. The girl at Philippi may have been such a demon-medium, and the possession is certainly to be regarded as genuine in her case.

Her masters] The Greek 'maid' was a slave, the property of certain men, possibly the priests of some shrine or temple, who made an income by her divinations.

Gain] Cf. xix. 24-5, where the same word is used (business). The men were a type of many in India and elsewhere who drive a trade at the expense of the superstitious feelings and religious credulity of the multitude.

Soothsaying] A word found only here in the New Testament. It is frequent, however, in the LXX of divination forbidden by the law of Moses (e. g. Deut. xviii. 10; 1 Sam. xxviii. 8; 2 Kings xvii. 17; Ezek. xii. 24). It comes from a root meaning 'to be frenzied'. We have plenty of such practices in this land.

17. Following after] Present participle, 'continually followed after'. The word is *Lukan* (a compound verb), occurring again only in Luke xxiii. 55, of the holy women following Christ's body to the tomb. How different the two 'followings after', both by women.

Cried out] Cf. Mark i. 26; iii. 11; v. 5, 7; Luke iv. 41; ix. 39; where the same verb occurs, also in connexion with those

18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

possessed by demons. As the demoniacs of the Gospels recognized our Lord, so this frenzied girl recognized His messengers. The darkness was troubled by the advent of the light.

The Most High God] The same title is found in Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28; Heb. vii. 1; and cf. Luke i. 32, 35, 76; vi. 35; Acts vii. 48. The expression 'God most high' is found in pagan inscriptions, and was in use among the heathen Greeks. It is suggested that it may have been the usual Gentile designation for the God of the Jews. As this soothsaying girl was herself the dedicated slave of some deity or demon, she saw in the missionaries men who were the consecrated bond servants of the true and living God.

The way of salvation] Either she, or the power which possessed her, had formed a true conception of the mission of God's servants at Philippi. The Gospel is a message of salvation both from sin and superstition (cf. iv. 12; xiii. 26, 47). For 'way', see ix. 2, note.

18. **She did]** 'She continued doing (imperfect tense) for many days.' The work in Philippi, then, went on for some time, though St. Luke has only narrated the crucial events.

Being sore troubled] See iv. 2, note. He was both 'grieved and pained'; grieved by reason of the girl's wretched state; and annoyed by the Satanic interruption to the work of evangelization.

Charge] The same verb as in i. 4; iv. 18; v. 28, 40; x. 42; xv. 5, etc. Cf. Luke viii. 29.

In the name of Jesus Christ] See iii. 6, note.

To come out of her] The same verb is used, in a similar connexion, in Matt. viii. 32; xii. 43; xvii. 18; Mark i. 26; v. 8, 13; vii. 30; ix. 25-6; Luke iv. 35, 41; viii. 2, 33, 35; xi. 14, 24.

But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain **19**
 was ¹ gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas,
 and dragged them into the market place before
¹ Gr. come out.

That very hour] An expression peculiar to St. Luke (Luke ii. 38; vii. 21; x. 21; xii. 12; xx. 19; xxiv. 33; Acts xxii. 13).

19. The hope of their gain] Opposition to the Gospel often arises from vested interests which are threatened by its progress (cf. iv. 1; xiii. 8; xix. 23-4). It is a coincidence worthy of notice that the verb 'gone' (see margin) is the same as the one used in v. 18. When the demon 'went out', their hope of gain 'went out' with it.

Paul and Silas] As the leaders of the missionary party.

Dragged them] Violently. St. Paul must have remembered his own former rough treatment of Christians (viii. 3).

The market place] The 'agora' (Latin, *forum*), or open space in the centre of the city which contained the public buildings, senate house, law courts, and temples of tutelary deities. Colonnades were there as places of concourse, etc.; and shops and marts in abundance. The 'agora' was the heart of a Greek city, where magistrates, civic functionaries, and others congregated. We have nothing quite like it in India. But we should say, in Indian parlance, that the missionaries were dragged off 'to the catchery'.

The rulers] The word used (*ἀρχοντες*) is the one usually employed to denote the board of magistrates in a Greek city, and would flow naturally from St. Luke's Greek pen. The technical term for the supreme magistrates of Philippi as a Roman colony follows in the next verse, and probably denotes the same authorities as are here alluded to. It is possible, however, that these 'rulers' were officials or city judges who happened to be administering justice at the time in the agora, and that they remanded the prisoners to the higher authorities (the magistrates, v. 20), finding that they were political offenders.

- 20 the rulers, and when they had brought them unto the
 1 magistrates, they said, These men, being Jews, do ex-
 21 ceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which
 it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being
 22 1 Gr. *πρα-* Romans. And the multitude rose up together
tors. against them : and the 1 magistrates rent their
 garments off them, and commanded to beat them with

20. Magistrates] Margin, 'praetors'. In Roman colonies, the chief authority was vested in two supreme officials (*duumviri*), who often, in imitation of the more dignified titles current in the imperial city, assumed the designation of 'praetors', though it did not actually pertain to them. They were popularly known by that name, and St. Luke employs the courtesy title, as it was in vogue in current phraseology. It is another proof of his accuracy.

Being Jews] Spoken contemptuously. The Romans often shewed strong antipathy to the Jews. It was just before this very event that the emperor Claudius ordered them to leave Rome (xviii. 2, note).

Do exceedingly trouble] A compound word found only here, 'to throw into utter disorder'. The simpler form of the verb is used in xv. 24; xvii. 8, 13.

21. Customs] See vi. 14, note. The charge was one of proselytizing and propagating an unlawful religion, calculated to subvert society.

Being Romans] Spoken with pride and dignity, in contrast with the foregoing words (being Jews). All the inhabitants of a Roman colony would affect the title of Romans, whether Latin by race or not.

22. Rose up together] A compound verb used only here. The appeal of the accusers to Roman pride immediately inflamed the prejudice and passion of the crowd which had gathered.

Rent their garments off them] That is, the praetors, by means of their lictors, rent the clothes of the prisoners. They,

rods. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, 23 they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, cast 24 them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in

apparently, gave the accused men no opportunity of replying to the charge, but dispensed with legal formalities to satisfy the mob. Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 2 (shamefully entreated).

To beat with rods] One word in the Greek. It occurs again in 2 Cor. xi. 25, giving an undesigned coincidence between St. Paul and St. Luke. We do not know certainly where the other two 'beatings with rods' occurred; but see xiii. 50, note. They could only have taken place in Roman colonies. Roman officials like those at Philippi were accompanied by attendants armed with rods called 'lictors' (see v. 35), and it was such attendants who inflicted this punishment on the two missionaries.

23. Many stripes] Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 23, 'in stripes above measure', another point of contact between St. Luke and St. Paul.

Cast them into prison] St. Paul was now experiencing that very affliction which he had once caused to others (viii. 3; xxii. 4; xxvi. 10).

Jailor] A word peculiar to this chapter. He was probably a Roman, the governor of the jail, a lesser official of some importance.

24. The inner prison] A prison within a prison, so to speak; some interior place of confinement further removed from the outer precincts, and so, most probably, from light and air, than the ordinary cells.

Made their feet fast] Literally 'made secure', a verb only used again in Matt. xxvii. 64-6 of 'making sure' the Saviour's tomb. In that case, a guard, a stone, and a seal were employed for greater security; in this, a prison, strong doors, and stocks. In both cases, however, God's power made short work of man's safe securings.

the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were **25** praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners **26** were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were **27** opened; and every one's bands were loosed. And

Stocks] Cf. Jer. xxix. 26. In this case, probably a wooden block with two apertures for the feet, wide apart from each other so that the prisoner's legs were at once held fast and painfully stretched and strained.

25. Midnight] A word occurring, in all, four times in the New Testament. We have—

(a) Midnight watching. Mark xiii. 35.

(b) Midnight entreating. Luke xi. 5.

(c) Midnight praying and praising. Acts xvi. 25.

(d) Midnight preaching. Acts xx. 7.

Were praying] See *Introd.* VI. 10.

Singing hymns] Like their Master (with His disciples) on the eve of His passion (*Matt.* xxvi. 30; *Mark* xiv. 26). 'God's birds can sing in darkened cages'. St. Paul's great message to the Philippians, in later years, was 'rejoice in the Lord always' (*Phil.* iii. 1; iv. 4). The prayer and singing were repeated and prolonged. Cf. *Jas.* v. 13; *Rom.* v. 3; xii. 12.

Were listening] A rare Greek verb, found only here in the New Testament. It denotes attentive listening. Such an unwonted sound in such a place may well have arrested close attention.

26. Suddenly] See *ii.* 2, for the same adverb.

Earthquake,] Cf. *iv.* 31. We know something, in India, of the startling suddenness and tremendous force of seismic shocks, especially in the region of the Himályas.

All the doors were opened] Ramsay suggests that each door was closed, not by a lock, but by a bar, and that this bar fell

the jailor being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself **28** no harm: for we are all here. And he called for **29** lights, and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them **30** out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

down because the earthquake shock forced the doorposts wider apart from each other.

Every one's bands were loosed] Most likely, they were chained to the wall, and, as the stones gaped from the shock, the chains became detached. Compare, however, xii. 7. Paul and Silas were also freed, miraculously, from the stocks.

27. Roused out of sleep] One word in the Greek, found only here. While the missionaries had been praying and singing, and the other prisoners listening, he had been sleeping. His house must have been hard by (v. 34).

About to kill himself] Knowing that he was responsible for the prisoners' safety (xii. 19).

29. Lights] As it was dark inside the cells, though there may have been starlight, or even moonlight, in the courtyard.

Sprang in] A verb found only here, but closely akin to the one used in xiv. 14 (sprang out). Contrast the two scenes.

Trembling for fear] See vii. 32, note, for the same word. He was in the presence of the supernatural.

Fell down etc.] He realized that, somehow, the God whom they served (v. 17) had interposed miraculously on their behalf; and their demeanour all through must have impressed him.

30. Brought them out] From the cell into the courtyard. The Bezan text adds, 'when he had made the rest fast', a characteristic addition.

- 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spake the word of ¹the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately.
- 32 ¹ Some ancient authorities read
- 33 *God.*

Sirs] An address of reverential respect (cf. John xii. 21; xx. 15). His prisoners are now regarded almost as his 'masters' (v. 16 where the same word is so rendered).

To be saved] Cf. v. 17; and see iv. 12. The missionaries were known, in the city, to be messengers of salvation; deliverance, that is, from the guilt and power of sin. This man was convicted of his sinfulness by the supernatural event which had occurred, and sought the way of salvation. His question has voiced the spiritual need of countless souls in after ages.

31. Believe on the Lord Jesus] He had called them 'sirs' ('lords'). They point him to the true 'Lord', the divinely-appointed Saviour, and invite him to repose his faith on Him. Salvation, on man's side, is by simple faith in the Saviour (cf. xiii. 39; Rom. iii. 22-4; v. 1). The hand of faith, so to speak, must be laid on Him.

And thy house] See v. 15, note.

32. Spake, etc.] They told him, in detail, God's message of salvation, instructing him in the main facts of the Gospel.

33. Took them] As though to some well or bath in the precincts of the prison.

Washed their stripes] Literally, 'washed them from (the bloodstains caused by) their stripes' (v. 23). They had been imprisoned with the bloodstains upon them.

Was baptized, he and all his] See v. 15, and references in note there.

Set meat before them] Literally, 'set a table before them' (margin) with a meal upon it. Cf. Ps. xxiii. 5.

And he brought them up into his house, and set ³⁴

¹meat before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, ²having believed in God.

¹ Gr. a table
² Or, having believed God.
³ Gr. praetors.
⁴ Gr. lictors.

But when it was day, the ³magistrates ³⁵ sent the ⁴serjeants, saying, Let those men go. And the jailor reported the words to Paul, *saying*, ³⁶ the ³magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore come forth, and go in peace. But Paul said ³⁷

They had been feeding his soul; now he, in gratitude, feeds their bodies.

Rejoiced greatly] The same verb as in ii. 26; the cognate noun occurs in ii. 46. Exulting joy is intended, and it is like St. Luke to emphasize it (Intro. VI. 9). We are struck by the stress laid on 'all his house'. He and all his were invited to believe together (v. 31); they heard the truth of the Gospel together (v. 32); they were baptized together (v. 33); and they greatly rejoiced together (v. 34).

Having believed in God] Perfect participle, implying that they rejoiced because they believed. Faith is the spring of joy (Rom. xv. 13).

35. The magistrates] The praetors (v. 20, note). The Bezan text reads, 'the magistrates assembled together in the agora, and, remembering the earthquake which had happened, were afraid and sent the serjeants, etc.' This sounds, however, like a later explanation.

The serjeants] Greek, 'the rod-bearers' or 'lictors' (*ῥαβδοῦχοι*). See margin. The title is cognate with the verb of v. 22 (beat with rods). See note there.

Let those men go] Most likely, this order was due, in some way, to the effect of the earthquake, which was connected in their minds with the missionaries. The shock which moved the foundations of the prison had shaken their minds also. They probably felt, too, that they had acted illegally the day before.

unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out. And the ¹serjeants reported these words unto the ²magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans;

38 ¹Gr. *lictors*.
²Gr. *prætors*.

37. Have beaten] See ch. v. 40; xxii. 19, for the same verb. It was against the Roman law to beat a Roman citizen.

Publicly] An adverb peculiar to the Acts (xviii. 28; xx. 20).

Uncondemned] This word only occurs again in xxii. 25, a nearly parallel incident. It was illegal to flog Roman citizens, whether condemned or uncondemned. We should understand the word, therefore, as meaning 'without investigating our cause'. Ramsay suggests that St. Paul claimed his Roman rights by a technical Latin term, which St. Luke has rendered loosely in Greek thus.

Men that are Romans] That is 'Roman citizens'. For St. Paul's Roman citizenship, see *Intro.* V. 1. It was probably owing to the mob turbulence of the day before that they had not claimed their political status then.

Privily] That is, 'secretly', an adverb found again only in *Matt.* i. 19; ii. 7; *John* xi. 28. It contrasts forcibly with 'publicly'.

38. They feared] Cf. xxii. 29. If reported and convicted, it would have cost them their post. The Bezan text considerably amplifies what follows, 'And they came with many friends into the prison and besought them to come forth saying, "we did not know concerning your matters that ye are just men"; and they brought them out and besought them saying, "Go forth from this city, lest again they make a tumult against us crying out against you".'

39. Besought] 'Asked'. Their former incivility was now turned into the utmost cordiality and courtesy. Those who had *beaten* them now *besought* them.

and they came and besought them; and when they 39 had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. And they went out of the prison, and 40 entered into *the house of Lydia*: and when they had seen the brethren, they ¹ comforted them, and departed.

¹ Or, *exhort-
ed*

40. **Lydia]** See vv. 14-15.

Had seen the brethren] Here we have a proof that fruit had been gathered in Philippi, and a congregation formed. The company would include, with Lydia's household, the converted slave girl and, perhaps also, Clement, Euodia, Syntyche, etc. (Phil. iv. 2-3).

The Bezan text adds 'they related what things the Lord had done for them and (comforted, etc.)'.

Comforted] Including exhortation (margin) and encouragement Cf. Phil. i. 27-30; ii. 21-16.

Departed] The third person shews that St. Luke was not with them. Apparently, he remained behind in Philippi (cf. xx. 6).

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XVI

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) The call to Europe. vv. 1-10.
- (2) The campaign in Philippi. vv. 11-40.

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) A critical epoch. vv. 1-10.
 - (a) Special help provided. vv. 1-3. (Timothy).
 - (b) Special work accomplished: vv. 4-5. (The churches strengthened).
 - (c) Special obstacles encountered. vv. 6-8. (Prevented from preaching).
 - (d) Special guidance vouchsafed. vv. 9-10.
- (2) Three typical conversions. vv. 11-40.
 - (a) Lydia, an Asiatic trader. vv. 13-15.
(In the place of prayer, by the ministry of God's word, amidst quiet and reverence).

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a
2 synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his custom was,

(b) The soothsayer, a Greek slave girl. vv. 16-18.

(In the place of public concourse, by the power of a special miracle, amidst noise and frenzy).

(c) The jailor, a Roman official. vv. 23-34.

(In the place of suffering, by a supernatural phenomenon, amidst storm and conflict).

Notice the gradations, from calm to storm. These events are typical of the order of the progress of the Gospel in the world; (1) among Asiatics; (2) among Greeks; (3) among Romans; travelling westward all the time.

CHAPTER XVII

1-9. THESSALONICA

1. **Passed through]** The Greek verb is *Lukan*, being used again only in Luke viii. 1. There it speaks of our Lord's journey; here of that of His servants. Ramsay well renders 'And they went along the (Roman) road'. The road in question is the 'Via Egnatia', which extended upwards of five hundred miles, from the Hellespont to Dyrrachium, a town on the east coast of the Adriatic Sea. From thence, after crossing that Sea by boat, travellers could journey to Rome along the Appian Way. Thus St. Paul and his companions made use of the Roman roads in their itinerations, as modern missionaries use Indian railways and highways.

Amphipolis] A town on the Egnatian Road. It was on the eastern bank of the river Strymon, about three miles from the sea. The river winds round the hill on which it was built in a semi-circle, and some have thought that it took its name (All-around city) from this fact. Others, however, attribute the name to the city's conspicuousness, visible all around, from sea and land. Its ancient name was 'Nine-ways'. After passing into the hands, successively, of the Athenians, Macedonians, and Romans, it was made a free city by the latter and the chief town of that division of Macedonia (xvi. 12, note). It was about

went in unto them, and for three ¹ sabbath days reasoned
¹ Or, *weeks* with them from the scriptures, opening and 3

thirty-two miles south-west of Philippi. The missionaries may have spent the night there, but do not seem to have preached.

Apollonia] Also situated on the Egnatian Road, about thirty miles south-west of Amphipolis. Very little is known of its history. It seems to be mentioned here as a town where St. Paul and his co-workers halted for the night, between Amphipolis and Thessalonica.

Thessalonica] About thirty-eight miles west of Apollonia, on the Egnatian Road, situated in the north-eastern recess of the Gulf of Salonica (modern name, Saloniki). Its maritime advantages, added to the fact that the waters of three rivers flow into the sea there, made it an important commercial centre. Its name is much later than the original city, and was given to it by Cassander, who rebuilt it in 315 B. C., in honour of his wife, Alexander the Great's step-sister. Under the Romans, it became the metropolis of the province of Macedonia, and the residence of the governor. It was allowed by them to retain its freedom and to have its own Macedonian constitution. Jews were numerous there, as in other centres of commerce.

A synagogue] See v† 9, note. In this it differed greatly from Philippi.

2. **As his custom was]** Another Lukan touch. The phrase occurs again only in Luke iv. 16, a most interesting parallel for St. Paul's custom, see ix. 20; xiii. 14; xiv. 1; xvii. 10, 17; xviii. 4; xix. 8.

Three sabbath days] Many render 'three weeks' (margin), since he may have taught daily in the synagogue (cf. v. 11; xix. 9). The word sabbath can be so rendered.

Reasoned] A verb frequent in the latter part of the Acts (v. 17; xviii. 4, 19; xix. 8-9; xx. 7, 9; xxiv. 12, 25). Originally, it meant 'to convince', and then came to denote 'to discuss by question and answer'. Our word dialectic is derived

alleging, that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, *said he*,
4 I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of

from it. The imperfect tense points to frequent and renewed discussion. We may illustrate what took place, to some extent, by the discussions which sometimes occur between Christian and Muhammadan representatives in Delhi and elsewhere.

From the scriptures] The Old Testament was the court of appeal on both sides, as all acknowledged its authority. The discussion turned on the right interpretation of Messianic promises and predictions.

3. Opening] See xvi. 14, note. Paul opened clearly the meaning of the Scriptures to his hearers.

Alleging] Literally 'setting forth (arguments)'; i. e. bringin forward passages of Scripture to prove his points.

It behoved the Christ to suffer] This was the doctrine which seemed such a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Cor. i. 18, 23). The idea of a suffering Messiah was repugnant to their minds. Even the apostles had been slow to realize the conception (Matt. xvi. 21-2; Luke xxiv. 25-7, 45-7).

To rise again, etc.] The resurrection is always emphasized in the Acts as the great proof of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus (ii. 23-33; iii. 15; iv. 10-12; v. 30-2; xiii. 29-38). St. Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, lays stress on these very two points (1 Thess. iv. 14).

This Jesus . . . is the Christ] St. Paul's great message to the Jews everywhere was this, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. For a Jew to accept that doctrine was for him to become a Christian.

4. Were persuaded] By his arguments and appeals. Cf. xviii. 4; xix. 8, 26; xxvi. 28; xxviii. 23. St. Paul had great powers of persuasion.

the chief women not a few. But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the

Consorted with] A verb peculiar to this verse. Its meaning is variously explained. (1) 'Cast in their lot with' Paul and Silas. (2) 'Were allotted' (by God) to the missionaries as disciples. Cf. xiii. 48; Eph. i. 11. (3) Ramsay renders 'were in addition gathered to' Paul and Silas, over and above the 'some of them' already spoken of. He leans to the Bezan text 'many of the devout, and of the Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few', and differentiates three separate classes beside the Jewish converts. The oldest manuscripts of course, support our text. In any case, we may well suppose that v. 4 describes an expansion of evangelistic work in the city, beyond that of the first three weeks in the synagogue (v. 2). Cf. xiv. 1-3.

Devout Greeks] See xiii. 43; xiv. 1, notes. As our reading stands, it denotes the uncircumcised Gentile adherents of the Jewish faith. A large number of such are said to have been won.

The chief women] See xvi. 13, note; and cf. v. 12. High-born women of influence in the city. They were probably Macedonians. St. Paul alludes to his work in Thessalonica (after his sufferings in Philippi), and to its phenomenal success, in 1 Thess. i. 5-10; ii. 1-4.

5. **Moved with jealousy]** Cf. xiii. 45, 50; and read St. Paul's independent reference to these events in 1 Thess. ii. 14-16, from which we see that it was still the evangelization of the Gentiles which roused the bitter enmity of the Jews.

The rabble] Literally 'market-men', 'loungers about the agora' (xvi. 19, note), i.e. men who, as we should say in India, lounged about the bazaar or the katchery, ready for mischief, 'badmashes'. The Thessalonians seem to have been notorious for laziness (2 Thess. iii. 10-13). The Jewish partisans found in the 'vile', or worthless, section of these loungers, a ready instrument for their purpose.

city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. And when they found them not, they dragged Jason
 6 and certain brethren before the rulers of the city,
 7 ^{1 Gr. the in-} crying, These that have turned ¹ the world
^{habited earth.} upside down are come hither also; whom

Gathering a crowd] One word in the Greek, found only here. Cf. xvi. 22.

Set . . . on an uproar] The noun which corresponds with the verb thus rendered is used in xx. 1; xxi. 34, of the similar uproars at Ephesus and Jerusalem.

The house of Jason] Where the missionaries had their lodging. They were absent when the mob arrived there. 'Jason' is the name of a Christian at Corinth (Rom. xvi. 21), and many identify him with this man. He was most likely a Jew by birth, and Josephus tells us (Antiq. xii. 5. 1) of a Hebrew called Joshua who changed his name to the more Gentile form of 'Jason'. We have other evidence of a similar kind. On the other hand, this man may have been a Gentile convert, though this is less probable.

Sought] Imperfect tense, 'continued to search' the house for them.

The people] See xii. 22, for the same word (*demos*). This may mean 'to deliver them over to mob violence'. Since, however, Thessalonica was allowed by the Romans to exercise its own constitution, which was democratic in character, we may understand the verse to mean that they sought to set the missionaries for trial before a public meeting of the people, i.e., the authoritative assembly of enfranchised citizens.

6. Dragged] See viii. 3; xvi. 19, for the same word.

The rulers of the city] Greek, 'politarchs'. This was the title given to the supreme board of magistrates at Thessalonica, the heads of the democracy, as is proved by a stone inscription from a Roman arch there, now in the British Museum.

Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

The use of it is a remarkable instance of St. Luke's extreme accuracy, since it is not found in any classical author.

Turned . . . upside down] A Paulo-Lukan verb (xxi. 38; Gal. v. 12). News of the disturbances at Philippi and elsewhere may have reached Thessalonica.

7. Hath received] See Luke x. 38; xix. 6; Jas. ii. 25, for interesting occurrences of the same verb. The charge against Jason was that of harbouring seditionists.

These all] That is, the missionaries, Jason, and all the Christians.

Contrary to the decrees, etc.] The emperors had promulgated many decrees against treason. Emperor worship, moreover, was being more and more fostered (Introd. IV. 4).

Another king, one Jesus] Cf. Luke xxiii. 2; John xix, 12, 15. St. Paul's teaching about the lordship of Jesus Christ probably lent colour to the charge. The word 'king' is the Greek for the Latin word *imperator*, emperor. It was beyond the power of many to discriminate between a spiritual kingship and an earthly one. Moreover, the Jews framed the charge in this particular way the better to accomplish their object. The very suggestion of treason was calculated to alarm men who, for the sake of retaining their special municipal constitution, were anxious to stand well with the emperor.

8. Troubled] See xvi. 20, note. It was the Jewish faction and their mob following who thus caused trouble. The magistrates, in particular, would wish to show their loyalty to the powers-that-be. It was as though some Christian preachers to-day were falsely accused before Government of preaching the overthrow of the British Ráj.

- 10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroëa: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.
- 11 Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these

9. Had taken security] That is, security (by money or sureties) for their good behaviour, so as to prevent further disturbance in the city. 'Binding men over to keep the peace' is far from being an uncommon proceeding in India. Ramsay suggests that the 'security' took the form of an undertaking, on the part of Jason and his friends, that St. Paul should not return to Thessalonica, and he quotes in support of his view 1 Thess. ii. 17-18.

We may supplement St. Luke's narrative by facts from St. Paul's letters. He spent a fairly considerable time in Thessalonica, nurturing the infant church (1 Thess. ii. 3-12; iv. 1-6). He worked with his own hands for his daily bread (1 Thess. ii. 6, 9; iv. 10-12; 2 Thess. iii. 7-9). He received contributions more than once from the grateful Philippian converts (Phil. iv. 15-16).

10-14. BEROEA.

10. By night] So as to avoid further tumults.

Beroëa] An ancient city about fifty miles south-west of Thessalonica, on the eastern slope of the Olympian range of mountains which stretch onwards towards Illyricum. Situated near the edge of a well-watered plain, it had advantages which made it a town of some importance. It was not on the Egnatian Road. Its modern name is Verria.

Into the synagogue] See v. 2, and the references there.

11. More noble] A Paulo-Lukan adjective (Luke xix. 12; 1 Cor. i. 26). It may denote nobility either of birth or of character, the latter being intended here. Contrasted with the ungentlemanly conduct of the Thessalonian Jews, the bearing of those in Beroëa was courteous, and their disposition liberal and generous.

things were so. Many of them therefore believed ; also 12 of the Greek women of honourable estate, and of men, not a few. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had 13

The word] Cf. x. 36.

Readiness of mind] Another Paulo-Lukan word (2 Cor. viii. 11-12, 19; ix. 2). It is used in the New Testament, as these texts will shew, (1) of a ready desire to hear God's word and (2) of a ready desire to give to God's work.

Examining] Also a Paulo-Lukan word. It is often employed of judicial investigations (e. g. xxiv. 8; xxviii. 18). It means to examine closely, as though sifting evidence. The Bereans tested St. Paul's teaching carefully and diligently (daily) by the standard of Holy Scripture. It is just such a careful and candid examination of the claims of the Gospel to which Christ's servants would invite their non-Christian brethren in India.

Were so] The Bezan text adds, for clearness, 'as Paul proclaims'.

12. Believed] The Bezan text goes on to say, 'but some disbelieved'. This may be an addition from chapter xxviii. 24.

The Greek women] See xvi. 13; v. 4. The Macedonian women are again to the front.

Of honourable estate] See xiii. 50, note.

And of men] This may, as here taken, denote the male population in general; but some consider that the description 'of honourable estate' refers to the men too, and instance Sopater, son of Pyrrhus (xx. 4), whose patronymic speaks of honourable birth.

This compressed account of operations in Beroea is most likely to be understood as including work outside, as well as inside, the synagogue (cf. xiii. 44-9; xiv. 1-3; xvii. 1-4).

13. The Jews] Thus the Jews of Macedonia followed the example of those of Galatia (xiv. 19) in dogging the steps of the missionaries. Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 15-16.

knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Berea also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes. And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea: and Silas and Timothy abode there still. But

Stirring up] Literally 'shaking' (cf. iv. 31; xvi. 26; 2 Thess. ii. 2). It was as though a fierce wind suddenly agitated quiet waters. /

Troubling] See xvi. 20; v. 8. In each case, the ignorance and prejudices of the populace were taken advantage of by the agitators. These Jews probably carried to Berea the charge of treason and quoted what had happened in Thessalonica.

14. The brethren] We have no separate mention of the Berean church in St. Paul's Epistles (but see 2 Cor. viii. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 10). Sopater must have been one of the chief of these 'brethren' (xx. 4).

As far as to the sea] The natural interpretation of this is that Berean friends escorted Paul to the sea coast where, (perhaps, at Dium, a seaport at the southern extremity of Macedonia near the base of Mt. Olympus), they embarked by ship for Athens. Some, however, favour a land journey to Greece by the road along the coast, but this is improbable.

The Bezan text would account for the omission of any effort to evangelize Thessaly, which lay between Macedonia and Greece,—'But he passed by Thessaly, for he was prevented from preaching the word to them' (cf. xvi. 8).

Silas and Timothy] They remained behind to establish the new converts and carry on further evangelistic work. We gather that Timothy had accompanied them from Philippi, viâ Thessalonica, to Berea, though he has not been specially mentioned in this chapter before. The spleen of the Jews was mainly directed against St. Paul.

they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they departed.

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his ¹⁶ spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city

15-34. ATHENS. PAUL'S SPEECH AT THE AREOPAGUS

15. They that conducted Paul] That is, some of the Berean Christians. They may have deemed an escort wise after the violence shown against him in Macedonia; or possibly they went with him to introduce him to friends in Athens. St. Paul was accustomed to having companions in all his travels. The party would land at the Piræus, the port of Athens.

Athens] The capital of Attica and the most celebrated city of ancient Greece. It was the home of classical literature and art, and gloried in a long past of political and intellectual fame. Under the Romans, it was included in the province of Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital. Athens, however, was still the intellectual centre, and was *the* university city of the Roman world. It was also the metropolis of Greek mythology. Its importance as a religious and philosophical centre can hardly be overestimated. St. Paul had come sufficiently, at Tarsus, under the influence of Greek culture and learning to realize the dominating grandeur of the great city in which he now found himself as a missionary of Jesus Christ. He could appreciate its learning; he could admire its beauties; but, most of all, he could pity its spiritual blindness and mourn over its idolatries.

Come to him with all speed] There is no mention in the Acts of the coming of Silas and Timothy to Athens. But we know from 1 Thess. iii. 1-2 that Timothy at least came, and the inference is that Silas came with him. If so, he was soon sent off on a special errand, perhaps to Philippi or Berea, just as Timothy was dispatched to Thessalonica. They finally rejoined Paul together at Corinth (xviii. 5).

16. Was provoked] A Paulo-Lukan verb, only found again

17 full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market-
18 place every day with them that met with him. And

in 1 Cor. xiii. 5. It is cognate with the noun (sharp contention) of xv. 39. He was roused to a warm jealousy for God's glory by the gross idolatry which abounded on every side.

Beheld] The word speaks of close observation (cf. iii. 16; iv. 19; vii. 56; viii. 13; x. 11). Paul was no inattentive visitor or careless sight-seer.

Full of idols] An adjective peculiar to this verse. Athens was filled with temples, shrines, altars, and idol-statues. It was the Benares of the Roman world, but a Benares refined and glorified by all the embellishments of Grecian art. The apostle, however, did not allow himself to be blinded to the true nature of idolatry by architectural or sculptural beauty. It was, in his eyes, an insult to the majesty of heaven (Rom. i. 22-3). We Christians need the same spirit of sorrow and pain, as we look on the idol-shrines of Kási or the carved temples of Southern India.

17. So] He was stirred by what he saw into earnest action; and he began his work, as usual, among the Jewish residents.

Reasoned . . . with] See v. 2, note. The tense is imperfect and marks repeated efforts.

Devout persons] See xiii. 43, note. Even in Athens, there were Greeks whose souls were unsatisfied by either the philosophy or idolatry which were prevalent.

The market place] The 'agora' (xvi. 19, note). The Athenian agora was crowded with works of art and beautifully painted porticoes in which philosophers lectured to their pupils, as well as with temples and the usual adjuncts of a forum. But the missionary was bent on his Master's business.

certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange ^{1 Gr. demons.} gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. And they 19

With them that met with him] A word peculiar to this verse, meaning 'those whom he chanced to come across'. The verb 'reasoned with' is exactly the one to describe the dialectic manner of teaching to which the Athenians had been long accustomed. Socrates had taught in just that manner in that very agora 450 years before. By question and answer and ordered reasoning, St. Paul sought to arrest attention to his message and to interest in the Gospel the frequenters of the forum (1 Cor. ix. 20-21).]

18. Epicurean] Epicurus was born in Samos 342 B. C., and settled in Athens thirty-five years later as a teacher of philosophy. He taught that pleasure is the chief end of man, pleasure, i. e. not in the sense of the gratification of each desire as it arises, but in the sense of securing the greatest possible amount of happiness in life when all the interests concerned have been taken into account. He regarded the gods as living a life of calm felicity, far removed from earthly turmoil and dissociated from all interference with mundane things. He gathered his disciples together in a famous garden for instruction. The Epicureans did not believe in the immortality of the soul; to them man's existence ceases with death. They were the materialists and utilitarians of Greek philosophy. Their doctrines would hardly appeal to Indian minds, although many modern educated Indians who live for money and comfort and do not trouble their heads about either religion or the life to come are more-than-Epicurean in practice.

Stoic] The other great philosophy then prevalent in Athens. The Stoics were followers of Zeno, a native of Cyprus, who flourished about 278 B. C. They were so called because he taught in a painted 'Stoa' (portico). The practice of virtue for its own sake was his favourite doctrine, and the great end

took hold of him, and brought him ¹unto ²the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things

20 ¹ Or, before
² Or, the
hill of Mars

of existence was considered to be the attainment of a state of mind which is not disturbed by either good or evil, pleasure or pain. He taught the need of mortifying the senses to this end. The Stoics, unlike the Epicureans, were strong believers in a spiritual universe, but were practically pantheists, holding the all-pervasiveness of the divine essence and the final absorption of human spirits into the divine. Their system was also strongly tinged with fatalism. It will be seen, therefore, that their tenets bore a strong resemblance to those of Hindu philosophy, especially to the doctrines of the Vedānta school. In fact, Stoicism was really oriental in origin and represented the contact of eastern influences and doctrines with the world of western classic thought. Zeno himself appears to have sprung from an Asiatic stock. Tarsus, St. Paul's birthplace, was a famous centre of Stoic teaching.

Encountered] This may mean 'opposed' him (as in Luke xiv. 31), but more probably means 'fell in with' and conversed with him.

Babbler] The word, which is peculiar to this verse, was used by the Greeks (1) of a crow or small bird picking up seed for its food, and so of a vulgar loafer or parasite who picks up a living as best he can; (2) of an ill-educated person who picks up scraps of knowledge and then retails them to others with a pretension to learning. The term, then, as used by the supercilious philosophers, suggested that St. Paul was alike an adventurer hunting for a livelihood and a pretentious babbler of pretended knowledge which he did not really possess. It is not an unknown thing in this country for self-satisfied persons to accuse Christian preachers and teachers of being actuated by pecuniary motives and to despise their message, without thoughtful examination of it, as foolish 'babbling'.

mean. (Now all the Athenians and the strangers **21**
sojourning there 'spent their time in noth-
ing else, but either to tell or to hear some
new thing.) And Paul stood in the midst
of the Areopagus, and said,

¹ Or, had
leisure for no-
thing else

22

A setter forth] An unusual form, peculiar to this verse.

Strange gods] Or 'foreign deities'. The Greek word rendered 'god' (our word demon) denotes deities both good and evil. Many people in this land have a like misconception as to the message of the Gospel, regarding it as proclaiming a foreign religion.

Jesus and the resurrection] Since the word 'resurrection' is feminine in Greek, they possibly regarded it as the name of a goddess, especially as they were wont themselves to erect statues to Piety, Modesty, and other personified and deified attributes. If so, Paul seemed to them to be preaching about two alien deities, the one 'Jesus' and the other 'Resurrection'. It is clear, at any rate, that the apostle taught in Athens the great facts about the Saviour, His death and resurrection.

19. Took hold of him] The verb may denote either a friendly action (ix. 27) or an unfriendly one. Both interpretations have been strongly advocated. Its sense will depend on what we understand the motive of the philosophers to have been, whether an amicable desire to hear more of the teaching or a hostile intent to bring St. Paul to a judicial inquiry of some kind or other.

Unto the Areopagus] Margin, 'before the Areopagus'. Standing near the agora, and a little west of the famous Acropolis, was a hill called 'Mars' Hill' (the literal translation of 'Areopagus'), so named from the legend of the trial of the god Mars supposed to have taken place there. Its brow was crowned with a temple erected to that deity. It was approached by a flight of sixteen steps. It has been generally supposed that the Athenian philosophers led St. Paul to this hill as a quiet spot, in order to give him a special hearing. An objection

Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye
 23 ^{1 Or, reli-} are somewhat ¹ superstitious. For as I pass-
^{gious} ed along, and observed the objects of your
 worship, I found also an altar with this inscription,

to this view lies in the fact that it was not a convenient place for the gathering of any very considerable audience. The name 'Areopagus', moreover, belonged not to the hill only but to a famous council which was wont to meet there, the members sitting in the open air on stone benches cut out of the solid rock. They were all, at least originally, men who had filled important magisterial offices, being upwards of sixty years of age. Their decisions, alike in matters of state and questions of religion, were regarded with superstitious reverence. Even under the Romans, they retained a good deal of authority and constituted the most august body in the whole of Attica. From the time of Chrysostom at least, it has been suggested that St. Paul was dragged before this court to stand a sort of trial. While the context does not favour formal judicial proceedings, we may perhaps understand that, as Ramsay suggests, he was required, as a strange lecturer, to give an account of his doctrine before the court and pass a test as to its character. Readers in South India will recall the once famous 'Tamil Sangam' of Madura, whose imprimatur was considered necessary for any Tamil author or literary work. St. Paul, so far from acting on the defensive before the famous council, seized the opportunity for setting forth the facts of Christianity before the most learned and aristocratic company of 'Sástris' which the western world contained.

20. Certain strange things] Ramsay renders 'some things of foreign fashion' and this is the most likely meaning (v. 18). Christianity often sounds 'foreign' to those unacquainted with its real message. In India, it is frequently so misunderstood as to be regarded as 'the foreigners religion'. And yet our Saviour lived and laboured in Asia, not in Europe.

21. Strangers sojourning there] Rather, 'resident strangers' (See ii. 10, note, for the same verb). Athens attracted men

¹ TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven

1 Or, *TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.* 24

from all quarters by the fame of its learning, and many settled there for a lengthy period.

Spent their time] Or, 'had leisure for' (margin), a verb found again only in Mark vi. 31; 1 Cor. xvi. 12. It was not a commercial city, and its residents and visitors affected a pre-occupation for intellectual inquiry. The tense (imperfect) indicates a constant habit. There is possibly a touch of pity (if not sarcasm) in the words.

Some new thing] Literally 'some newer thing', something always newer, that is, than the novelty of the week before. Their intellectual curiosity is fully confirmed by contemporary writers. Their great orator, Demosthenes, had rebuked their idle, unpractical inquisitiveness some 400 years before. There is the same danger, in some quarters of India, of spending time on mere metaphysical speculations which would be better employed in works of practical utility. Man's true end and occupation in life are not to be found in mental gymnastics but in promoting the glory of God and the welfare of his fellow men. As students of history know, the glory of Athens had really departed, and the philosophers of St. Paul's day were, for the most part, trading on past fame and apeing a culture which had really lost its robustness. †

22. Ye men of Athens] Classical words, with which Thucydides, Demosthenes, and other orators had often opened their orations. St. Paul began in a faultlessly correct way, and we note his ability to adapt himself exactly to his audience (Intro. VI. 4).

I perceive] The same verb as in v. 16 (beheld), which see. He had taken careful note of their religious attitude and idolatrous cults.

Somewhat superstitious] Margin, 'religious'. The word only occurs here in the New Testament, but the cognate noun is

25 ^{1 Or. sanc-} and earth, dwelleth not in ¹ temples made
^{tuaries} with hands; neither is he served by men's

found in xxv, 19. It means, literally, 'fearing the gods' and was used both in a good sense as 'religious' and in a bad sense as 'superstitious'. St. Paul certainly meant that he perceived the Athenians to be 'addicted to the worship of their gods' and so 'religious'; but he may have purposely used a word which suggests superstition as well as piety. It would be difficult to find a word more suitable to express the attitude of millions in India, very religious as devoted to their gods, temples, and ceremonies, and yet superstitious withal.

23. Observed] The verb of v. 22 (perceive) strengthened by a prefix which gives it the sense of 'observing again and again'. It occurs elsewhere only in Heb. xiii. 7. St. Paul had studied the Athenian altars and worship. He had even read the inscriptions.

The objects of your worship] A word used again only in 2 Thess. ii. 4. It includes altars, images, idols, and all the emblems of idolatry.

To an unknown God] Margin, 'To the unknown God'. We have evidence from Pausanias and Philostratus, who both knew Athens at a period a little later than St. Paul's visit, that there were altars there erected 'for unknown gods', so that we may well believe that the one which the apostle saw was not the only one of the kind. They were probably erected in consequence of some visitation or trouble by worshippers who did not know to what deity they should address their invocations. St. Paul made this inscription the text, so to speak, of his sermon. He used the Athenian worshipper's confessed ignorance of the name and character of the deity whom he addressed as the point of approach to the souls of his hearers.

We have here suggestions for ourselves. To find out the spiritual attitude of the people around us and to approach them with the Gospel along lines which appeal to their deepest religious feelings is surely a method to be cultivated by Indian missionaries and preachers. The word 'unknown' occurs only

hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and 26

here. It is ours to tell men in spiritual darkness that though God may be 'unknown' to them, He is not unknowable (John xvii. 3). Agnosticism will never satisfy the human heart.

Worship] With sincere, though mistaken, piety. The verb carries this meaning. It occurs again only in 1 Tim. v. 4. Cf. John iv. 22.

[**]** Emphatic. They had called him a 'babbling' (v. 18), but he is now seen to be an earnest and intelligent preacher.

24. The God that made, etc.] Cf. xiv. 15. The Epicureans denied the creation, holding matter to be eternal. Some of the schools of Hindu philosophy hold similar tenets. Stoicism, again, while it regarded the Greek gods as potent and active, was yet, essentially, pantheistic, like the Advaita philosophy of India. In face of such misconceptions, St. Paul boldly proclaimed the true God to be an almighty Person, the Creator of all things.

He, being Lord] With the thought of His original as well as present lordship. Here, again, His personality is emphasized. He is declared to be master and sovereign of all the universe. The Epicureans, on the other hand, looked on the gods as practically dissociated from the control and conduct of earthly things.

Dwelleth not in temples made with hands] See vii. 48, note. Both Jew and Gentile needed this reminder. The august sovereign Lord of all things cannot be confined in any earthly temple (Isa. lxvi. 1-2). The worship of images and idols, placed in shrines and regarded as deities, both shews a wrong conception and is derogatory to the glory of the one true God.

25. Served] A verb which occurs only here, in this sense, in the New Testament. It was employed classically to denote, among other things, the service of the heathen gods, and is used here in that connexion. The true God is not thus 'served by men's hands', as being dependent on His creatures. When

he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation;

we remember the character of the 'pújá' offered to idols in Hindu temples, we shall realize the meaning of this verse.

As though He needed anything] Needed anything over and above what is His already. Cf. Ps. l. 8-12. Even the Epicureans held that the deity is selfsufficing and needs nothing from men, though they erred in other respects. In the light of this truth, we see how unworthy and debased is that conception of worship which is shewn in the bathing, feeding, clothing, and transporting on cars of so-called 'deities'.

He Himself giveth to all life, etc.] The true God is here declared to be not only the Creator and Sovereign but also the Preserver of the universe, the continual source of life and breath and every good. This was diametrically opposed to Epicurean teaching.

26. Made of one every nation] The Bezan text has 'of one blood', but the older MSS. omit the word 'blood'. The Athenians prided themselves on being 'indigenous', sprung from the sacred soil; and the Greeks in general despised other nations as 'barbarians'. St. Paul's words, therefore, conveyed wholesome truth. At the same time, his main contention is that the true and living God is the God of all men, within their reach if they will but seek Him.

We need in this country the constant reminder that God has made us all of 'one', European and Indian, Bráhmaṇ and Pariah.

Having determined their appointed seasons] For 'determined', see ii. 23; x. 42, where the same verb is used. St. Paul is now speaking of God's providential dealings, a doctrine in which the Stoics could, to some extent, follow him. The 'appointed seasons' are not only those of seed-time and harvest (Gen. viii. 22; Cf. xiv. 17), but also the successive epochs of human and national development.

that they should seek God, if haply they might feel **27** after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and **28** have our being; as certain even of your own poets

The bounds of their habitation] Both nouns are peculiar to this verse. God has over-ruled the distribution and progress of the various nations (Cf. Deut. xxxii. 8). His hand guides and shapes the whole course of human history. Thus He is seen to be the Creator, Sovereign, Preserver, and Director of all things.

27. That they should seek God] This is God's object in creation, preservation, and providence, namely, that men should seek and find Him. They ought not to have fallen into the sin of idolatry, and there is no excuse for their having done so (Rom. i. 18-25).

If haply they might feel after Him and find Him] For the verb 'feel after', see Luke xxiv. 39; Heb. xii. 18; 1 John i. 1, the only other passages in which it occurs. The optative form of the sentence suggests that God's intention had not been fulfilled. Instead of seeking and finding Him and realizing His presence 'as by touch of hand', they had turned aside to idle speculations or to gross idolatry. The history of Hinduism is a sad commentary on this. 'Groping after God', in a sense, there certainly has been; but the continual declension, on the whole, from Védic worship, through the philosophical speculations of the Upanishads, to the gross polytheism and idolatry which now everywhere abound is unmistakable, though Hindu religious teachers have appeared from time to time who have protested bravely against popular errors and contended for a purer faith.

Though He is not far etc.] And, as the Greek suggests, has been near at hand all the time. There is, therefore, no excuse for the failure to seek Him.

28. In Him we live etc.] That is, in His all-embracing power, providence, and governance. We are not to think of the Deity after a materialistic fashion, as a subtle essence or substance

29 have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man.

¹ Or, *that which is divine*

universally diffused through space, like wind or ether. This is the mistake of pantheism. But we are to think of Him as an almighty Person, omnipresent and omniscient, so that nothing lies beyond His knowledge and controlling might.

For we are also His offspring] This is a quotation from the Greek poet Aratus (270 B.C.), a Stoic from St. Paul's own Cilicia. Almost identical words occur in the hymn to Zeus of Cleanthes (300 B.C.) which was a sort of Stoic creed. While the apostle takes stanzas thus from Greek writers, he is not to be considered as in any way endorsing all the views they held. He merely uses their own confessions of a truth which they only dimly realized in order to lead on his hearers into clearer light. Similar quotations from the Greek classics occur in 1 Cor. xv. 33; Titus i. 12, shewing the apostle's acquaintance with them. We have thus a clear precedent for making use of Indian classics and the half-truths imbedded in them for evangelistic purposes. Most preachers know how readily the attention of a Hindu audience is arrested by a quotation from their own Sanskrit or vernacular poets, some of whom saw the error of idolatry and approximated it to a monotheistic creed.

29. Being then the offspring] St. Paul does not quote the classics to tickle the fancy of his hearers or to make a parade of his learning, but in order to use the quotation as a basis on which to rest a reasonable conclusion and so prepare the way for the presentation of the Gospel. It is Christianity alone which fully reveals the Fatherhood of God.

The Godhead] Better, 'that which is divine' (margin). Almost exactly the same Greek word, in its Sanskrit form, is in use in the same sense in India to-day (*dévam*, -*daivam*). The apostle's argument is two-fold. (1). Those who are God's 'offspring' ought not to dishonour their high origin by bowing

The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; 30 but now he ¹commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day, in the which

1 Some ancient authorities read 31
declareth to men.

down before the works of their own hands. (2). It is insulting to the majesty of the true God, who transcends all things, to represent His being by man-made images.

Gold or silver or stone] India abounds with just such idols. With the apostle's argument before us, we see the fallacy of the contention so often advanced, and that by intelligent Hindus, that idols are merely emblems necessary for the ignorant and vulgar, to remind them of the existence and claims of God. So far from reminding them of Him, or representing Him in any sense, they really represent, in form and appearance, the beings described in the Puránas and Itikásas, deities discarded in these days by the more thoughtful Hindus. They thus distract the attention of the people from the true God, who is a Spirit, holy, loving and wise, to degraded ideas of deity.

Graven by art and device of man] And nowhere had art reached so high a level, or were idols and images so beautiful in form, as at Athens. St. Paul however, did not allow art to blind him to the perils of idolatry. The word 'device' denotes the internal thought (Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25; Heb. iv. 12) which finds expression in the outward 'form' of art.

30. The times of ignorance] See xiv. 16, where the argument is much the same. The word 'ignorant' is cognate with 'unknown' (v. 23). This very term in its Sanskrit form (ajnána) is represented in Hindu philosophy as the chief cause of man's failure and bondage. Cf. also the Muhammedan use of the phrase 'the days of ignorance' for the period before the preaching of Islam.

Overlooked] A verb peculiar to this verse. Cf. xiv. 16. The meaning is that God did not actively interfere to prevent them, by special judgments, etc.

he will judge ¹the world in righteousness ²by ³the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

¹ Gr. *the inhabited earth.*
² Gr. *in.*
³ Cr. *a man*

But now] God's special revelation in the Gospel of Christ takes away all plea of ignorance from those who have heard it. Instead of speculation about the past, therefore, or criticisms on God's methods of dealing with man, it is ours to do right in the present.

Commandeth] Or, 'chargeth' (i. 4, note). As the margin shews, some ancient authorities read 'declareth to'. And this is to all, everywhere.

Repent] So as to turn from idols to serve the living God (xiv. 15; 1 Thess. i. 9), and from sin to holiness (ii. 38, note).

31. Hath appointed a day] A definite statement concerning a definite future event. The Day of Judgment is already fixed. And hence, argues the apostle, comes the urgent call to repentance (Cf. Rom. ii. 4-9; 2 Cor. v. 10-11; Gal. vi. 7-8).

Will judge] See x. 42, note.

In righteousness] For God is holy and will by no means clear the guilty (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Ps. vii. 11-12). 'In righteousness', and so we can safely leave the issues to One who knows every man's case and will do nothing unjust (Gen. xviii. 25; Rom. ii. 12-16; Rev. xv. 3).

Ordained] The same word as in v. 26 (determined). See ii. 23, note.

He hath given assurance] Or, 'He hath furnished a guarantee'. The resurrection of our Lord is the guarantee alike that the risen One possesses the authority and power for His office as Judge (Rom. i. 4; John v. 26-7), and that there will be a general resurrection of the dead followed by a righteous judgment (Rev. xx. 11-13).

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the 32 dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. Thus Paul went out 33 from among them. But certain men clave unto him, 34 and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the

In that He raised, etc.] Cf. x. 40-42, notes. And thus, in the very metropolis of the world's philosophy, the Christian doctrine of the resurrection was clearly sounded forth. We know from v. 18 that he had previously taught it in the agora, together with the main facts about our Lord Jesus Christ. Apparently, his address before the Areopagus was interrupted at this point by derision.

32. Some mocked] See ii. 13, for the same verb. To the Epicureans, who held that there is no life beyond death, the doctrine of the resurrection would seem an idle myth. To the Stoics also, though they believed in a future existence, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body would appear strange and unwelcome, since they looked forward, as most Hindus do, to absorption in the divine essence as the consummation to be desired. The tense is imperfect; 'they began to mock', or 'they continued mocking'.

But others said,] This is understood by some to indicate a courteous dismissal; by others, to denote an adjournment of the court of the Areopagus for further inquiry. On the whole, it seems most naturally to suggest that, as against the mockers, some were more seriously disposed toward the new teaching and desirous of hearing more on some future occasion. Anyhow, an attitude of cynicism characterized the majority, and the court of the Areopagus was far from being ready to accept the Gospel. St. Paul seems to refer to this in 1 Cor. i. 18-31; ii. 1-10. It is much the same in India to-day.

33. From among them] Literally, 'from the midst of them', i. e. of the Areopagus (see v. 22). The apparent results were small, but his work was not without fruit.

34. Clave unto] See ch. v. 13; ix 26, notes.

Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

1 After these things he departed from Athens, and

Dionysius the Areopagite] A member, that is, of the august court of the Areopagus (v. 19, note). As such, he was a man of weight and seniority, and had probably filled the office of 'archon' or chief magistrate. We know nothing further of him for certain.

Damaris] Supposed by some to be a variant of 'Dāmalis' (heifer), a name common among the Greeks. As it stands, however, it has a foreign sound, and it has been suggested that she was a foreigner of not very reputable character, since it was not the custom of Greek women of respectability to appear in a public meeting of this kind. She may have been something like an Indian 'déva-dási', or woman dedicated to a temple. If so, we have a signal instance of the power of the Gospel to reach the most sinful and degraded.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XVII

1. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) St. Paul at Thessalonica. vv. 1-9.
- (2) St. Paul at Beroea. vv. 10-14.
- (3) St. Paul at Athens. vv. 15-34.

2. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) Three typical cities.
 - (a) Opposition to the Gospel. Thessalonica. vv. 1-9.
(From religious bigotry. Much fruit gathered).
 - (b) Interest in the Gospel. Beroea. vv. 10-14.
(From religious sincerity. Bible searching. Considerable results).
 - (c) Indifference to the Gospel. Athens. vv. 15-34.
(From pride of philosophic learning. Small results).
- (2) A typical address to cultured pagans.
 - (a) Starting from their own acknowledged aspirations after God. vv. 22-3.
 - (b) Setting forth the divine personality and glory. vv. 24-8. (Creator, Sovereign, Director, Father).

came to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named **2** Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and

- (c) Shewing the evil of debased conceptions of the Deity. vv. 24-5, 29.
- (d) Emphasizing the duty of man to seek after Him and find Him. vv. 27-8.
- (e) Quoting from their own 'sástras' in support of his arguments. vv. 28-9.
- (f) Proclaiming the need for true and immediate repentance. v. 30.
- (g) Affirming the doctrine of a judgement to come. v. 31.
- (h) Attesting the resurrection of Christ and the facts involved in it. vv. 31.

CHAPTER XVIII

1-18. CORINTH

1. Corinth] The capital of the Roman province of Achaia' and residence of the governor. As Athens was the intellectual centre, so Corinth was the political and commercial centre of Greece. It was situated at the southern extremity of the narrow isthmus of the same name, which connected the Peloponnesus with the Grecian mainland, and had two harbours, the eastern one Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf, and the western one Lechaemum on the Gulf of Corinth. Thus it stretched two arms, so to speak, to unite the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, and lay on the quickest and most central route from Rome to the East. Julius Caesar refounded it as a Roman 'colony' in 46 B. C. It had a very large population, among whom, besides the native Greeks, might be found Romans, Jews, and strangers from various lands. Corinth was famous for the Isthmian Games. It was notorious, too, for its immorality, its temple of Aphrodite alone having connected with it a thousand 'déva-dásis'. It was only fifty miles distant from Athens; but to go there from that university city was like passing from Oxford to London; or, in a certain sense, like moving from Benáres to Calcutta.

3 he came unto them; and because he was of the same
trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by
4 their trade they were tentmakers. And he reasoned
in the synagogue every sabbath, and ¹ per-
¹ Gr. *sought*
to persuade. suaded Jews and Greeks.

It has often been pointed out that St. Paul seems to have been disappointed by the attitude of the Athenian philosophers, and determined to preach more earnestly than ever the simple truth about 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified' (1 Cor. ii. 1-5). He found that many of the lowly were prepared to accept that 'wisdom of God' which philosophers, in their pride of intellect, despised (1 Cor. 1. 26-31). We may observe similar phenomena in India to-day.

2. **Aquila . . . Priscilla]** Aquila, we read, was a man of Pontus (ii. 9, note), who had settled in Rome. The name is Latin. His wife, Priscilla or Prisca (St. Paul always uses the latter name, of which Priscilla is the diminutive or familiar form) also bears a Latin name, and is usually mentioned before her husband (vv. 18, 26; Rom. xvi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 19), from which fact some have conjectured that she was a Roman lady of some position, whom Aquila the Jew had married. The order of names, however, would be equally accounted for, if she had a stronger Christian personality; and she, too may have been a Jewess by birth. We find them accompanying St. Paul to Ephesus (v. 18), and staying on there when he left (v. 26). They are next seen in his company again in that city (1 Cor. xvi. 19). Later, we find them once more in Rome (Rom. xvi. 3-4). And our last notice of them shews them back again in Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 19). ✓

[Claudius] See xi. 28, note.

Had commanded all the Jews, etc.] The historian Suetonius mentions this and says the reason was 'that the Jews were in a very disturbed state there through the instigation of one Chreestus'. This would be a Gentile author's natural name for Christ (Chreestus = 'good, useful'), and so we may perhaps suppose that it was Christian teaching which was causing a

But when Silas and Timothy came down from 5 Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. And 6 when they opposed themselves, and ¹blasphemed, he shook out his raiment, and said

¹ Or, *railed*.

division among the Jews in Rome, as elsewhere. This decree of Claudius is to be dated A. D. 49 or 50, preferably the latter. It, apparently, proved impracticable, as Dio Cassius tells us, to carry it into full effect, and we find a large body of Jews there a few years later (xxviii. 17).

Came unto them] He found a welcome in their house. We do not know whether they were Christians already, or whether they became converts after contact with the apostle. By association with them he not only received hospitality, but established also a connexion with Rome. Possibly, it was their information which first shaped his desires to go and preach in the imperial city (xix. 21; Rom. i. 11-15).

3. Of the same trade] An adjective peculiar to this verse. It was the custom of Jewish parents, whatever their social status, to teach all their sons some manual trade, an excellent way of inculcating in their minds the dignity of labour. We shall do well to learn this lesson from wholesome Hebrew customs in a land where manual occupations are so strictly confined to certain castes and regarded as beneath the dignity of those of higher social pretensions. It was this oneness of occupation, apparently, which brought St. Paul and his new friends together.

And they wrought] The apostle was a hard worker, and we frequently find him supporting himself by the work of his own hands, so as not to be burdensome to others (xx. 34; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8). His own Epistles to the Corinthians fully bear out St. Luke's statement (1 Cor. iv. 11, 12; ix. 12, 15; 2 Cor. xi. 7-9; xii. 14). /

Tentmakers] A noun found only here. At Tarsus, there was a famous local industry, that of making tents out of special

unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I am
7 clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And
he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain
man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God,

goats' hair material called cilicium after Cilicia. Such goats' hair
tents are still in use in Asia Minor. Aquila and Priscilla may
have had a sort of *dépôt* for the sale of them in Rome.

4. He reasoned] See xvii. 2, note. The tense (imperfect)
marks continuance. The Bezan text adds 'laying upon them.
(i.e. on their attention) the name of the Lord Jesus'.

In the synagogue] See xvii. 2, note.

Persuaded] See xvii. 4, note. The imperfect tense may have
the force of the margin, '*sought to persuade*'.

Greeks] See xiv. 1, note. God-fearing Greeks connected with
the synagogue are clearly indicated here.

5. When Silas and Timothy came] See xvii. 14-15, notes; and
cf. 2 Cor. i. 19. The latter of these companions cheered him with
good news of the steadfastness of the Thessalonian converts (1
Thess. iii. 6-10), and so helped to inspire him with new evange-
listic zeal. Probably, Silas brought similar encouraging news
from Philippi or Beroea.

Was constrained by the word] Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 16. We find the
same verb used of the constraining force of the Father's will
(Luke xii. 50); of the stimulus of the Saviour's love (2 Cor. v.
14); and of a longing desire for the spiritual good of men (Phil.
i. 23). Silas and Timothy brought him pecuniary help (2 Cor.
xi. 9; Phil. iv. 15) which enabled him to devote himself more
exclusively to preaching. He was thus able to surrender him-
self more wholly to the constraining power of God's word; and
he was actively assisted by Silas and Timothy (2 Cor. i. 19).
Others render, 'He was wholly absorbed in preaching'.

Testifying] See ii. 40, note. An advance on the 'reasoning'
of v. 4. It savours of personal testimony and of confident affir-
mation.

whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, 8 the ruler of the synagogue, ^{1 Gr. believed the Lord.} believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. And 9 the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not

That Jesus was the Christ] More literally, 'that the Christ (Messiah) is Jesus'. See xvii. 3, note.

6. Opposed themselves] The same verb is found in Rom. xiii. 2; Jas. iv. 6; v. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5. It speaks here of organized opposition, 'they ranged themselves against' the Gospel.

Blasphemed] See xiii. 45, note; and cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Shook out his raiment] For the same verb, and a similar sign of protest, see xiii. 51. Cf. Neh. v. 13; Matt. x. 14. It expressed the fact that he was shaking himself free from all responsibility towards them; and it was a warning to them to take heed lest God should shake them out of the lap of His grace.

Your blood, etc.] An expression familiar to the Jews (Joshua ii. 19; 2 Sam. i. 16; 1 Kings ii. 37; Matt. xxvii. 25). They must accept the full responsibility for their rejection of the Gospel and the awful danger which that involved.

I am clean] Cf. xx. 26. His conscience was clear. He had done all he could to promote their spiritual welfare.

Unto the Gentiles] Cf. xiii. 46. That is, to the general body of the Gentiles unconnected with the synagogue. Thus closes the first stage of St. Paul's work in Corinth, that among the Jews and their adherents. A similar separation had to take place in Ephesus (xix. 9), as it had already happened in Pisdian Antioch and elsewhere.

7. Departed thence] That is, 'changed his place from the synagogue'. The Bezan text says 'from Aquila', i.e. from Aquila's house. But we cannot say certainly that he used Justus's house as anything more than a preaching centre (xix. 9).

10 afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am
with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm
11 thee: for I have much people in this city. And he
dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word
of God among them.

Titus Justus] Some old MSS. have 'Titius Justus'; and others 'Justus' only. For 'Justus', see i. 23, and cf. Col. iv. 11. Unlike his Jewish namesakes, this man was a Gentile. Ramsay thinks he was a Roman, one of the 'colonists' of the city, and that his friendship was likely to help Paul in approaching the more influential classes of Corinth. He is not mentioned again by name in the New Testament.

One that worshipped God] See xiii. 43, note. A Gentile who had been attracted to the synagogue by the desire for a purer faith. He had, clearly, been influenced by Paul's teaching, and so opened his house to him for preaching purposes.

Whose house joined hard to the synagogue] It 'bordered on' the synagogue (a verb found only here), and gave the apostle special opportunities for attracting any of the Jews and proselytes who might wish to hear more of the Gospel. It would, at the same time, be accessible to the outside population.

8. Crispus] Mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 14, as having been baptized by St. Paul himself. Though a Jew, his name is Latin. As he was 'the ruler of the synagogue', his conversion must have provoked the Jews more than ever. It justified the apostle's wisdom in keeping within easy reach of the synagogue. His was by no means the only conversion from the synagogue. 'The household of Stephanas' had previously become Christians (1 Cor. i. 16), and Gaius was another convert (1 Cor. i. 14). See also 1 Cor. i. 11; xvi. 17; Rom. xvi. 23.

With all his house] Cf. xvi. 15, 33. /

The Corinthians] That is, the Gentile inhabitants of the city. Most of these were persons of no special repute (1 Cor. i. 26-9), and some of them were saved from the very depths of sin (1 Cor. vi. 9-11).

But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews 12 with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgement-seat, saying, This man 13

Believed and were baptized] Imperfect tense, indicating frequent occurrences.

9. And the Lord said] For other interpositions of the Lord Jesus at critical junctures, see xxiii. 11; xxvii. 23. We gather that the opposition of the Jews continued to grow more bitter. It is reflected in St. Paul's Epistles to Thessalonica, written during his stay in Corinth (1 Thess. ii. 15-6; 2 Thess. iii. 1-2). Cf. xx. 3.

A vision] See vii. 31, note.

Be not afraid] Cf. xxvii. 24. A word of re-assurance in view of threatened trouble. Nothing is to prevent his teaching and preaching. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 16.

10. I have much people in this city] For 'people', see xv. 14, note. The apostle was, therefore, not only to face the opposition bravely, but also to continue at Corinth that the harvest might be gathered in. See next verse.

11. Dwelt] Lit. 'sat down'. Ramsay renders 'settled'. Cf. Luke xxiv. 49, for the same verb used in a similar sense (tarry). With such clear directions before him, and indications of the Lord's special presence, he 'settled down' for a steady spell of evangelistic work.

A year and six months] During which he wrote his two Epistles to the Thessalonians. The Gospel spread through 'the whole of Achaia' (2 Cor. i. 1); a congregation, in particular, being founded in Cenchraea (Rom. xvi. 1).

Teaching the word of God] A phrase pointing specially to the instruction and consolidation of the new church (cf. ch. v. 42; xi. 26, notes). The first Epistle to the Corinthians throws light on this feature of his work. His steady spell of labour was interrupted by a new effort of the Jews. /

12. Gallio] Elder brother of Seneca, the famous philosopher, Nero's tutor and favourite, and uncle of Lucan the poet. He

persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.
 14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of

was born in Spain, his father being Marcus Annaeus Novatus, but he was adopted by Lucius Junius Gallio, whose name he assumed. That he held office in Achaia is corroborated by the statement of Seneca that he caught fever there and had to leave for a sea-royage. Since his brother Seneca was in disgrace from A. D. 41-9, when he again regained the emperor's favour, Gallio must have been governor of Achaia subsequent to that date. The most probable dates for his assuming that office are A. D. 52 and A. D. 53, most likely the former. Pliny mentions that he afterwards attained the dignity of consul at Rome. Contemporary evidence shews him to have been a man of a particularly amiable disposition.

Proconsul] See xiii. 7, note. Achaia had been a senatorial province from 27 B. C.—A. D. 15. It was then amalgamated with Macedonia and Mysia into an imperial province. From A. D. 44, however, Claudius had made it once more a senatorial province, under a proconsul. So St. Luke is again seen to be remarkably accurate in his terminology.

Achaia] Denoting, under the Romans, the whole country of Greece, made into a separate province in 27 B. C.

With one accord] See i. 14, note; and cf. vii. 57.

Rose up against] A compound verb peculiar to this verse; but cf. xvi. 22. It denotes a violent assault. They sought to take advantage of the arrival of a new governor.

Judgement seat] Greek, 'beema', a movable seat for the administration of justice, which had been set up in the agora. Cf. xii. 21; xxv. 6.

13. Persuadeth] See xvii. 4, note. The usual simple verb is here strengthened by a prefix, which may give it the sense of 'win over'.

Contrary to the law] This may mean either the Roman law, in which case the charge was similar to that laid at

wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if they are ques- 15
tions about words and names and your own law,
look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge
of these matters. And he drave them from the judge- 16
ment-seat. And they all laid hold on Sosthenes, the 17

Philippi (xvi. 21), or the Jewish law, which had obtained legal sanction as a tolerated religion.

14. Gallio said] Ramsay thinks that he had probed the allegation and seen into the heart of the matter before he spoke thus. He saw that there was no need to call for any defence.

Wrong] A word occurring again only in xxiv. 20; Rev. xviii. 5. It denotes a 'legal wrong', a breach of the law of the State.

Wicked villainy] One word in the Greek, found only here, but cognate with the one used in xiii. 10, which see. It indicates a 'moral delinquency'.

Reason would, etc.] That is, 'it would have been reasonable for me to enter into your case'.

15. Questions] As though 'a set of questions'. For the word, see xv. 2, note.

About words] Singular number, 'of (mere) word', as against deed.

And names] As against realities. To the free-and-easy Roman governor, the controversy about the Messiahship of Jesus Christ was a mere question of words and names.

And your own law] As against Roman law.

I am not minded] Spoken with an air of contempt. His sense of Roman justice protected the missionary, though he had no interest in his doctrine. St. Paul usually met with fair treatment from Roman officials (Introd. IV. 4).

16. Drave them] A verb peculiar to this passage. He saw it was what is now called a 'trumped-up' case, and so summarily dismissed it, ordering his lictors (xvi. 35, note) to clear the court.

ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things.
 18 And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having

17. **They all]** That is, as seems most likely, the Gentile onlookers, whose sympathies on this occasion were with Paul, and who seized so good an opportunity of wiping off old scores against the Jews, after the rebuff the latter had received from the proconsul.

Sosthenes] He is described as 'the ruler of the synagogue', and probably succeeded Crispus in office after the latter's conversion (v. 8). Doubtless, he was the leader of the Jewish party in their prosecution of St. Paul, and the irritated Greeks seized on him as such. We do not know that he is the same person as is mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 1. If so, he must have been converted after this event. Possibly, the beating which he now received induced serious reflections.

Beat him] Repeatedly (imperfect tense). They administered 'lynch law'.

Gallio cared for none, etc.] This is usually understood as meaning that he shewed no interest in religion, and so his name has become proverbial for religious indifference. It probably means, however, no more than that he paid no attention to the conduct of those who beat Sosthenes, considering that the Jews richly deserved such rough handling.

18. **Many days]** See ix. 23, note. We may regard them as included in the year and a half of v. 11. The latest attack of the Jews was an interlude.

Took his leave] This particular verb is chiefly Paulo-Lukan (Mark vi. 46; Luke ix. 61; xiv. 33; v. 21; 2 Cor. ii. 13). After so long an association, the good-bye must have been an affecting one; and St. Paul's Epistles shew his tender regard for the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor. iv. 14-15; xvi. 24; 2 Cor. i. 6-7; ii. 3; iii. 2; vii. 11-16; xii. 15).

shorn his head in Cenchreæ: for he had a vow. And 19 they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with

Called thence] Cf. xv. 39, for the same verb. Here it is in the imperfect tense, 'set out on the voyage', indicating the actual launching forth. Cenchreæ was, of course, the port of embarkation.

For Syria] Definitely bound for the Holy Land. It was probably a pilgrim ship, taking Jewish passengers for one of their great annual festivals.

Priscilla and Aquila] See v. 2, note. Mark the order of their names. Silas and Timothy are not mentioned as going with them.

Having shorn his head] Some commentators refer this to Aquila, whose name immediately precedes, but there can be little doubt that St. Paul himself is intended. The shaving of the head was connected with the fulfilment of the vow of the Nazirite (Num. vi. 13-21). According to the letter of the law, this ceremony should take place in the temple of Jerusalem; but we have evidence that, at that period, a person who had taken a temporary Nazirite vow was allowed to poll his head elsewhere provided that he carried the hair so polled with him to the temple and burnt it with the rest of his hair when finally shaven there. Josephus speaks of these modified Nazirite vows (Wars. II. 15. 1). It would appear that St. Paul had taken a Nazirite vow, possibly on deliverance from some great danger, and that he polled his head before embarkation, intending to complete the ceremonies of his vow in Jerusalem. Though the vindicator of Gentile liberty, he conformed himself, in various respects, to the laws and customs of his own people (see xx. 6, 16; xxi. 26; xxvii. 9; 1 Cor. ix. 20).

Coremonial shaving of the head by Hindus is familiar to us in India, in connexion with the death of relatives and the fulfilment of vows.

In Cenchreæ] The eastern port of Corinth, about eight and a half miles distant along the Isthmian plain. From the

20 the Jews. And when they asked him to abide a longer
21 time, he consented not; but taking his leave of them,
and saying, I will return again unto you, If God will,

Acro-Corinthus, or ridge beyond Corinth, both this and the western port Lechaëum were plainly visible. We have an undesigned coincidence with his visit there in Rom. xvi. 1-2, where we read that Phoebe, a 'servant or deaconess' of the church there rendered the apostle some signal assistance. He may have had a severe attack of his constitutional malady there and made his vow in consequence. ✓

19. Came to] 'Arrived at' (xvi. 1, note).

Ephesus] The real capital of the Roman province of Asia (ii. 9, note), and, after Corinth, the next great city in order on the main central route from Rome to the East. It lay three miles from the sea, on the river Cayster, which was navigable at that period as far as the city. Four great roads diverged from Ephesus as routes of traffic. With these natural advantages, it was the great commercial centre of all that part of Asia Minor, and ranked with Alexandria and Syrian Antioch as one of the most important cities of the Roman East. It was to the province of Asia very much what Bombay is to India. (Pergamum however, was the residence of the Roman proconsul, one of the most important governors of the empire). It contained a goodly company of Greeks, as it had been formerly a Greek colony. The vast majority of inhabitants, however, were Asiatics, zealously attached to their old pagan religion, and proud of the temple of their goddess who, though originally the deity of an aboriginal cult, had adopted under the Greeks the name of Artemis. Her temple stood a little distance outside the city, near the slope of a hill, and was the religious centre of the whole district (xix. 27, note).

The voyage from Cenchræe to Ephesus would occupy from two to three days, the route leading past some of the islands of the Greek Archipelago. The ship called at Ephesus, *en route* for Caesarea, probably to take in more pilgrims and to allow the passengers to spend the Sabbath in the synagogue.

he set sail from Ephesus. And when he had landed 22 at Cæsarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch. And having spent some 23 time *there*, he departed, and went through the region

He left them there] That is, when he resumed his voyage, after his visit to the synagogue, etc. They may have remained there for trade purposes, and St. Paul found them still in Ephesus when he returned on his next journey (1 Cor. xvi. 19). We may suppose that he lodged with them during his present short visit.

Entered into the synagogue] Cf. xvi. 2, 10; v. 4. The Jews of Ephesus were numerous and important.

Reasoned] See xvii. 2, note. On this occasion, interest was aroused, not opposition.

20. Consented not] This verb is not found elsewhere. It means primarily 'to nod assent', and then, generally, 'to assent'. We notice that he was not now prohibited by the Spirit from preaching in Asia (xvi. 6).

21. Taking his leave] See v. 18, note. The Bezan text and some other ancient authorities add, after the word 'saying', the words 'I must by all means pass the coming feast in Jerusalem'. This may be an explanation added to the original text later, but it probably gives the true reason for the apostle's haste. Cf. v. 18. He was hurrying to keep the Feast of the Passover (some think, Pentecost) at Jerusalem and to fulfil his voluntary vow.

Return] For the same verb, see Matt. ii. 12; Luke x. 6 Heb. xi. 15. It means 'to bend back' and so, 'to return'.

If God will] A consideration which should condition all our plans. See xxi. 14; 1 Cor. iv. 19; xvi. 7; Heb. vi. 3; Jas. iv. 15. /

Set sail] See xiii. 13, note.

22. Landed] The verb (to go down) is a Lukan one (Luke iv. 31; ix. 37; Acts viii. 5; ix. 32; xi. 27; xii. 19; xiii. 4;

of Galatia and Phrygia in order, stablishing all the disciples.

- 24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, ¹a learned man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been ²instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake
- 25 ¹Or, *an eloquent man.*
²Gr. *taught by word of mouth.*

xv. 1; xviii. 5, 22; xxi. 3, 10; xxvii. 5). It is used in the same sense here as in xxi. 3; xxvii. 5, 'to go down' from the high seas to the coast.

Caesarea] See viii. 40, note. The destination of the ship.

Went up] That is, to Jerusalem (cf. xi. 2; xv. 2; xxi. 12, 15; xxiv. 11; xxv. 1, 9); just as we might speak of 'going up' from the mofussil to Calcutta. This was St. Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem since his conversion, and must have been very brief. We have no particulars of it. Doubtless, he took part in the Feast, fulfilled his Nazirite vow, and had fellowship with the church there.

Went down] The same verb translated 'landed' above, which see.

Antioch] See xi. 20; xiii. 1; xiv. 26; xv. 30. The starting point for his missionary journeys. Here he spent 'some time', say several weeks at least. Ramsay thinks that the Epistle to the Galatians was written at this juncture, just before the Third Missionary Journey, supposing that the Judaizing party had disturbed the churches there during the apostle's absence in Europe. The vocabulary of the Epistle, however, seems to demand a later date, as it has strong affinities with the Epistle to the Romans. This is the last mention of Antioch in the Acts.

Third Missionary Journey xviii. 23-xxi. 17

This time, the apostle's main work was to lie in the Roman province of Asia, in which he had not been permitted to preach

and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to 26

on his former tour, save for one Sabbath at Ephesus on his return journey. Thus the provinces of Cyprus, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia were, one by one, occupied and churches established. Of these, the greatest was Asia, which ranked, in Roman estimation, with the vast province of Africa.

28. Tour in the Galatic and Phrygian Regions

23 Went through] See viii. 4, note. A fresh itinerating tour by land, viâ Tarsus and through the 'Cilician Gates' (xvi. 1, note).

The region of Galatia and Phrygia] Literally 'the Galatic region and the Phrygian (region)', regarding 'Phrygian' as an adjective (xvi. 6, note). 'The Galatic region' was that part of Lycaonia which was included in the Roman province of Galatia and was popularly known by that name. It contained Derbe and Lystra, among other towns. Just so, 'the Phrygian region' was that part of Phrygia which was reckoned to the province of Galatia, in which were situated Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. Thus St. Paul revisited his Galatian churches for the second time. The 'north Galatian' theory, on the other hand, which is favoured by the reading of the text, requires us to suppose that, on his way from Syrian Antioch to Ephesus, he went three hundred miles or so out of his road to visit north Galatia, and then passed through Phrygia to his destination. It is open to objection also on other grounds (ch. xiii. *Introd.* remarks).

In order] A Lukan adverb. He uses it of 'writing' in order (Luke i. 3); of 'working' in order (Luke viii. 1; Acts xviii. 23); and of 'speaking' in order (xi. 4; cf. iii. 24).

Stablshing,] See xiv. 22; xv. 32, 41. Some old MSS. have a simpler form of the verb used in the former passages.

24-28. APOLLOS AT EPHEBUS AND CORINTH

24. Apollos] An abbreviated form of 'Apollonius' (Bezan text). He was a native of Alexandria (see vi. 9, note), the

speaking boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully.

head-quarters, so to speak, of Hellenistic Judaism, and the city in which the Jews had come into closest contact with Greek learning and philosophy. After his first stay in Ephesus, and the visit to Achaia described in vv. 27-28, we find him back in Ephesus again (1 Cor. xvi. 12), unwilling to revisit Corinth at that juncture because of the party factions there, in which his name had become involved (1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 5-6, 22; iv. 6). We then lose sight of him, till the period shortly before St. Paul's second Roman imprisonment, when he is seen either in Crete or about to arrive there (Titus' iii. 13). He is characterized as being a fervent orator, with a philosophical tone about his teaching.

A learned man] The adjective occurs only here. It connotes both 'learning and eloquence' (see margin). The notices of him in 1 Cor. agree.

Came to] 'Arrived at' (xvi. 1, note).

Ephesus] See v. 19, note.

Mighty in the scriptures] Cf. vii. 22. It means that he was well versed in the Jewish Scriptures and was able to use them with effect.

25. Had been instructed] A Paulo-Lukan verb (Luke i. 4; Acts xxi. 21, 24; Rom. ii. 18; 1 Cor. xiv. 19; Gal. vi. 6). As the margin shews, it usually means 'to instruct by word of mouth' (our word catechize), though it may also be used in a looser sense. The oral instruction of disciples by their gurus is a familiar custom in India. The Bezan text adds 'in his country', i.e. Alexandria.

In the way of the Lord] For 'way', see ix. 2, note. As the context shews, the phrase means 'the way of the Lord Jesus,' i.e. Christianity. He had a knowledge, though an imperfect one, of the truth of the Gospel.

And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia,

Fervent in spirit] Literally 'boiling in spirit' (cf. Rom. xii. 11, the only other passage in which the word occurs). His soul was aflame with holy enthusiasm. He compares strongly with the cold philosophers of Athens.

Spake and taught] Imperfect tense, 'Set to work speaking and teaching'.

Carefully] Literally, 'accurately'. This adverb is used of searching accurately (Matt. ii. 8); following out a subject accurately (Luke i. 3); and teaching accurately (Acts xviii. 25-6). It shews that Apollos knew more about the facts of the Gospel than is commonly supposed.

The things concerning Jesus] That is, apparently, the main facts about the life and work and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not only John the Baptist's testimony concerning Him. He must, therefore, have somehow and somewhere come across definite Christian teaching, however incomplete it may have been. We can easily understand this in India, where there are many persons who possess a certain knowledge of many of the truths of Christianity, without really knowing its full meaning.

Knowing only the baptism of John] Cf. ix. 3. John the Baptist's mission had made a great impression on the Jews, and its effects were felt far and wide. It is clear that Apollos, while accepting John's baptism unto repentance, had not been taught hitherto about Christian baptism, in spite of his knowledge of many of the facts about our Lord. It has been suggested (by Blass and others) that there may have been in circulation at that period some written account of the life of Jesus Christ, such as the substance of St. Mark's Gospel, but without mention of Christian baptism in it; and that Apollos may have acquired his knowledge from this, directly or indirectly. This, of course, is conjectural, and v. 25 points to his having received oral rather than written instruction.

26. **To speak boldly]** See ix. 27, note.

the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he 'helped them much which had believed through grace: for he powerfully

1 Or, *helped much through grace them which had believed*

28

Priscilla and Aquila] See vv. 2, 18. They appear to have attended the synagogue.

Took him unto them] The same verb as in xvii. 5, but indicating a very different kind of 'taking'.

Expounded] See xi. 4, for the same verb.

More carefully] The comparative of the adverb of v. 25, 'more accurately'. They supplemented Apollos's imperfect knowledge of the Gospel. We may conclude that he accepted Christian baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit (xix. 2-6), though this is not specially mentioned.

27. Was minded] See ch. v. 28, note (intend). The Bezan text accounts for his determination by saying 'And there were certain Corinthians sojourning in Ephesus, and when they heard him they besought him to cross over with them into their country'.

Achaia] See v. 12.

Encouraged] This verb, found only here, denotes 'to urge forward' (as though a runner). The Ephesian Christians, with Aquila and Priscilla who were well known in Corinth, actively encouraged Apollos's purpose, and gave him a commendatory letter (cf. 2. Cor. iii. 1). Some, however, would render, 'the brethren wrote encouraging the disciples (at Corinth) to receive him'.

Helped] A Lukan verb, found only here with this particular signification. He 'watered' what St. Paul had 'planted' (1 Cor. iii. 6).

Through grace] This may be connected directly either with 'believed', as in the text; or with 'helped', as in the margin. Both their faith and his ministry were dependent on the divine favour. For 'grace', see xiii. 43, note.

confuted the Jews, ¹ *and that* publicly, shew-
ing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. ¹ Or, *shew-*
ing publicly

28. Powerfully] A Lukan adverb, found again only in Luke xliii. 10. *There*, it is used of anti-Christian vehemence; *here*, of Christian strenuousness.

Confuted] A very strong compound verb, peculiar to this verse, 'he kept arguing them down'. He completely refuted them at every point, and that 'powerfully'.

By the scriptures] Which he knew so thoroughly, and could expound so effectually (v. 24).

That Jesus was the Christ] Or, 'that the Messiah is Jesus' (v. 5, note). We learn from St. Paul's Epistle that Apollos's style of preaching proved so attractive at Corinth that some of the Christians there formed themselves into an 'Apollos party' (1 Cor. i. 12), with wisdom and eloquence as their ideals. It was probably in consequence of this that Apollos withdrew and returned to Ephesus. He deprecated such divisions in the church (1 Cor. xvi. 12).

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XVIII

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) Paul at Corinth. vv. 1-18.
- (2) Paul at Ephesus (*en route*). vv. 19-23.
- (3) Apollos at Ephesus and Corinth. vv. 24-8.

II. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) Three typical experiences. vv. 1-18. (At Corinth.)
 - (a) Discouragement. vv. 1-6. (Opposition to the messenger. Rejection of the message. Yet, finds new friends and comrades.)
 - (b) Encouragement. vv. 7-11.

{	Conversion of souls. Confirmation of faith (vision of Christ). Continuance of success.
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 - (c) Disparagement. vv. 12-17. (Dragged to court. Misrepresented and falsely accused, but protected.)

1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at
 Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country
 2 came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he

- (2) A special preacher. vv. 24-8. Apollos.
 (a) Facility in speaking. v. 24 (margin).
 (b) Efficiency in Bible knowledge. v. 24.
 (c) Sincerity in testimony. v. 25. (Teaching clearly all he
 actually knew.)
 (d) Fervency of spirit. v. 25.
 (e) Docility of disposition. v. 26. (Ready to learn.)
 (f) Constancy in labour. v. 27. (Ready for new efforts.)
 (g) Ability in service. vv. 27-8. } Helping the Chris-
 tians.
} Evangelizing the non-
 Christians.

CHAPTER XIX

1-4. EPHESUS. PAUL'S THREE (REALLY TWO AND A QUARTER) YEARS' STAY

His work at Ephesus, affecting as it did the whole district round about, is a good illustration of continuous missionary work in a strong centre.

1. Having passed through] See viii. 4, note. In xviii. 23, we saw him itinerating through Roman Lycaonia and Roman Phrygia as far as Pisidian Antioch. His missionary tour is now continued further. The Bezan text reads, 'Now when Paul was wishing after his own counsel to go to Jerusalem, the Spirit bade him return into Asia. And he passed through, etc'. This reading supposes that he did not pay his intended visit to Jerusalem (xviii. 21), and has apparently arisen from a misconception, since there can be no doubt that the visit was really paid.

The upper country] Literally, 'The upper parts', a phrase usually explained as indicating 'districts lying inland', by those who hold that he travelled through north Galatia. A more natural interpretation, however, lies to hand. There were two

said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed? And they *said* unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether ¹ the Holy Ghost was *given*. And he said, Into what ³ then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's

routes from Pisidian Antioch to Ephesus. The more usual one, after leading sixty miles south-west, joined the great thoroughfare from the East at Apamea, and so passed down the valley of the Lyous by way of Colossae and Laodicea. The other road was more direct and, avoiding Apamea, passed *over higher ground*, following the river Cayster, to Ephesus—the whole distance being about 200 miles. In warm weather, the higher altitude would be preferable, though it was more toilsome for ordinary traffic. It is, clearly, to this road along 'the higher-lying parts' that reference is here made.

To Ephesus] See xviii. 19, note. According to the conditional promise given during his previous short visit there (xviii. 21). He, most likely, took up his abode with his old friends, Aquila and Prisca (1. Cor. xvi. 19).

Disciples] This term is confined in the Acts to the disciples of Christ, and so these men must have been Christians by profession, however imperfect and defective their knowledge of the Gospel. The same remark holds good of the word 'believed' in the next verse.

2. **Did ye receive the Holy Ghost, etc.]** Some marked defect in their character, conduct, or religious bearing must have suggested the question. He may have heard, too, through Aquila and Prisca, of Apollos's experience (xviii. 25-6).

Whether the Holy Ghost was (given)] Cf. John vii. 39. This fairly represents the sense of the original, which refers to a special effusion or operation of the Spirit. All Jews knew from Scripture of the existence of the Holy Ghost, and John the Baptist had spoken clearly about Him. But these men had not heard of His pentecostal effusion. They were in much the same position as Apollos when he first came to Ephesus. Some have supposed, indeed, that they were disciples of

4 baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after 5 him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Apollos, but this cannot have been the case, or they would not have continued in partial ignorance. They had, most likely, only recently arrived in Ephesus when St. Paul met with them. Otherwise, we should have expected Aquila and Prisca to have instructed them, as they had done Apollos.

3. **John's baptism]** See xviii. 25, note. This is the last mention of the Baptist in the New Testament.

5. **Baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus]** See ii. 38, notes. John's baptism was the sign and seal of repentance; *this*, of the remission of sins and eternal life. Both repentance and faith are signified and ratified by Christian baptism, and it is also the symbol of entrance into a new and risen life.

6. **Had laid his hands]** See vi. 6; viii. 15-17, notes. Though now baptized, they still, like the Samaritan converts, lacked the supreme gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost came on them] See i. 8, note.

They spake with tongues and prophesied] See ii. 4, 17, notes; and cf. x. 46. This is the third and last mention in the Acts of 'speaking with tongues', and the special phenomenon emphasized here is that of prophesying, or the inspired 'forth-telling' of divine messages. The verbs are in the imperfect tense, marking the prolonged continuance of the phenomena. In view of the fact that the speaking with tongues on the two former occasions was the prelude to special work among Jews and Gentiles, we may conclude that the mention of similar phenomena on this third occasion also is intended to mark the inauguration of a new and important work. It is when the professing Church is endued with spiritual power that the world outside is reached and evangelized. This is a lesson to be noted by the Church of India.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the 6 Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And they were in all about 7 twelve men.

And he entered into the synagogue, and spake 8 boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading *as to* the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and disobe- 9 dient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude,

8. The synagogue] See xvii. 2. The preliminary work in the church is followed by a clearly defined stage of evangelistic labour, that among the Jews of Ephesus, who were both numerous and influential.

Spake boldly] As Apollos had previously done (xviii. 26). See ix. 27, note; and cf. Eph. vi. 20, where St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, uses the very same word. The Bezan text adds, 'with great power'.

For the space of three months] So that his campaign in the synagogue was unusually prolonged (cf. xiii. 44-6; xiv. 1-2; xvii. 2-4). The more receptive attitude of many of the Ephesian Jews has been already marked (xviii. 20-21, 24-6).

Reasoning and persuading] See xvii. 2, 4, notes.

Concerning the kingdom of God] See viii. 12, note.

9. Were hardened] A verb specially used of the Jews, and chiefly in respect of their refusal to hear and obey God's voice (Rom. ix. 18; Heb. iii. 8, 13, 15; iv. 7). The tense is imperfect; the process of hardening went on continually. If our hearts do not accept God's truth, they grow more and more persistent in their opposition to it.

Disobedient] Also a verb in the imperfect tense. It combines the ideals of unbelief and disobedience. See xiv. 2. In the Greek, there is a reference to the word 'persuaded'. 'They would not be persuaded, but continued un-persuaded and disobedient.'

he departed from them, and separated the disciples, 10 reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this

Speaking evil] A verb found again only in Matt. xv. 4; Mark vii. 10; ix. 39.

The Way] See ix. 2, note.

Before the multitude] The Bezan text adds 'of the Gentiles'.

Departed from them] As he had been compelled to depart from the Corinthian synagogue (xviii. 6-7).

Separated the disciples] See xviii. 27. The men mentioned in vv. 1-7 would probably be of their number; perhaps also Trophimus (xxi. 29).

Reasoning daily] The same verb as in v. 8. See also xvii. 2, note.

In the school of Tyrannus] The word 'school' (scholee), from which our English equivalent is derived, occurs only here in the New Testament. It denotes 'a lecture hall', and Tyrannus was, most likely, a Greek philosophical teacher from whom the apostle hired the room. His lecture room was probably in one of the 'gymnasia', or places for public resort and recreation which existed in places like Ephesus. Some are of opinion that he may have been a convert or inquirer like Titus Justus (xviii. 7). Others, again, think that he was a Jew, his 'school' being a 'Beth-Hammidrash' or place where the Jewish law and traditions were expounded. The Bezan text adds, after 'Tyrannus', the words 'from the fifth to the tenth hour', and it is difficult to see how they could have been introduced unless they represent the facts of the case. There is evidence that ordinary business in the Asian cities ended at 'the fifth hour', i.e. at eleven a.m. Thus Tyrannus would close his rhetorical lectures at that hour and his lecture-hall would be available for use by St. Paul. We know that the apostle supported himself in Ephesus by manual labour (xx. 34; 1 Cor. iv. 11-12); and so we may regard him as labouring at his trade during the usual 'business hours', and then busying himself with daily preaching from eleven a.m. to four p.m., when the people had leisure to listen to his message. In addition

continued for the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. And God ^{1 Gr. powers} wrought special ¹ miracles by the hands of Paul: 11

to this, he performed various other ministries (xx. 20-1, 31). Well might he describe himself as working 'night and day' (xx. 31; 1 Thess. ii. 9). His tireless energy rebukes our ease and sloth.

10. For the space of two years] Cf. xviii. 11. He alludes to this prolonged and special opportunity in 1 Cor. xvi. 9. This period excludes the 'three months' of v. 8. According to Jewish reckoning, any space of time over two years and up to three would be called 'three years', and hence the statement of xx. 31. It was Paul's longest stay in any missionary centre.

All they which dwelt in Asia] Ephesus attracted people from all round for commercial, political, and religious purposes, and many of these must have heard the Gospel there and carried the knowledge of it back to their own homes. Some of St. Paul's coadjutors and converts may also have made itinerating tours from head-quarters. We know that Timothy, Erastus, and other fellow-workers were with him at this time (v. 22), and Col. i. 1; Philem. 1 seem to imply that Timothy was well known at Colossæ. To this period, we may reasonably refer the foundation of the other six of the 'seven churches of Asia' (Rev. i. 4, 11), as well as of those at Colossæ and Hierapolis (Col. iv. 13). Epaphras (Col. i. 7; iv. 12), Philemon, and Archippus (Col. iv. 17; Philem. 1-2), all of them Colossian Christians, appear to have had personal contact with St. Paul and to have shared his labours. They were probably the fruit of his ministry at Ephesus.

11. Wrought] 'Continued working' (imperfect tense).

Special miracles] Literally 'extraordinary powers' (i.e. miracles of power). For 'miracles', see ii. 22, note (mighty works). As the pseudo-miracles performed at Samaria (viii. 9-13) and Paphos (xiii. 8-12) were confounded by genuine miracles of power, so was it also at Ephesus.

- 12 insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out.
- 13 But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them which had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure

By the hands of Paul] Cf. ch. v. 12.

12. Unto the sick] Who could not come to Paul themselves.

Body] A word peculiar to this verse, and denoting, properly, 'the skin or surface of the body'.

Handkerchiefs] Really a Latin word 'sudaria', meaning cloths for wiping off perspiration. It occurs again in Luke xix. 20; John xi. 44; xx. 7. (napkin). They were, it appears, 'handkerchiefs' with which the hard-working tentmaker had wiped off the sweat of honest toil.

Aprons] Also a Latin word 'semi-cinctria', aprons worn by artisans in their work. It is peculiar to this verse. These, too, were clearly used by the apostle in his labours.

Departed from] An unusual verb (Luke xii. 58; Heb. ii. 15), frequently used by medical writers, as in this verse, of the removal of sicknesses. As usual, St. Luke the physician distinguishes between ordinary 'diseases' and extraordinary possession by 'evil spirits' (ch. v. 16; viii. 7). ♣

13. Strolling Jews] For the same verb, meaning 'to go round', see xxviii. 13; 1 Tim. v. 13; Heb. xi. 37. These men travelled about from place to place plying their dark art, just as men of a similar character go from village to village in India to-day.

Exorcists] The word occurs only here. It means literally 'those who expel (demons or diseases) by adjuring some sacred name'. Cf. Matt. xxvi. 63, for the cognate verb. Many of the Jews had become addicted to the practice of magic (Luke xi. 19); and Josephus (*Antiq.*: viii, 2, 5) voices traditions which ascribed, though of course erroneously, the

you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were 14 seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, which

invention of spells and incantations to Solomon himself. Ephesus was the very centre of all magical arts (see v. 19), and these wandering Jews doubtless drove a good trade there, probably uniting heathen methods and formulæ with their own. We have similar practices all around us in this land. 'Mantravadis' and 'devil-dancers' are legion, and exorcism is one of their main businesses. The same customs exist among the less educated Muhammadans (da'wat or mantar-jantar), magical circles and squares being drawn round the demoniac, flowers strewn, and incantations read over cow-dung ashes which are then thrown over the head and shoulders of the person supposed to be possessed.

Took upon them] See ix. 29, note (went about).

The name of the Lord Jesus] Using it as a mere incantation, just as the names of deities are used to-day by heathen exorcists. Cf. iv. 7, note.

Adjure] The very verb from which the name 'exorcist' is derived in its simplest form. It occurs again in Mark v. 7; 1 Thess. v. 27. Incantation tablets have been found beginning with this very formula, 'I adjure you by (such and such a name)'.

14. Seven sons] Instead of 'seven sons of one (or, a certain) Sceva', many ancient MSS. read 'there were some (as though, about) seven sons of Sceva'. The Bezan text has 'Amongst whom also the sons of one Sceva a priest wished to do the same, who were accustomed to exorcize such persons; and, entering into (the house of) the possessed, they began to invoke over him the name, saying, "We charge thee by Jesus whom Paul preacheth to come forth"'. The Bezan text thus omits the number seven.

Sceva] Probably, a name of Latin origin (Scaeva), which had been Graecized in form. It has been found in an inscription at Miletus.

15 did this. And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus .I 'know, and Paul I know; ^{1 Or, recog-}
 16 but who are ye? And the man in whom the ^{nise} evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled
 17 out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of

A chief priest] See iv. 23, note. He may have been one of the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests; or been termed 'chief priest' popularly because of his connexion with a high-priestly family; or even have been an ex-high-priest himself. At first sight, the title seems strange in such a connexion, but there are many illustrations of the sons of great and honoured personages taking up strange professions. Some would interpret it as meaning that these exorcists gave out themselves to be sons or disciples of a Jewish high-priest, the better to attract attention.

15. Jesus I know] The verb suggests a personal knowledge and recognition (margin, recognize). The evil spirit was well aware of the Saviour's power. Cf. Mark i. 23-4.

Paul I know] A different verb, implying knowledge of a lower degree; 'I know about Paul'.

16. Leaped on them] The verb is peculiar to this verse. He sprang violently upon them.

Mastered] For the same verb, see Matt. xx. 25; Mark x. 42; 1 Pet. v. 3. He completely overpowered those who had attempted to bring him under the control of a spell. ;

Both of them] This would shew that only two of the seven were really present (v. 14), or else that two of them were ringleaders in the exorcism. The reading of the Bezan text in v. 14 (see note there) would, of course, obviate the difficulty.

17. Fear fell upon them all] Cf. v. 11, 13.

the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many also of them **18** that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. And not a few of them that practised ^{1 Or, magi- 19} curious arts brought their books together, ^{cal} and burned them in the sight of all: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces

Was magnified] Since it was seen how awful a thing it was to take that name in vain. The tense is imperfect, 'continued to be magnified'.

18. That had believed] The new converts realized, as never before, the power of the name of the Lord Jesus, and were convicted of their sins. The taint of old evil practices had, hitherto, still lingered among them.

Confessing and declaring] Both verbs speak of public acknowledgment. Sins against the Christian Body are to be openly dealt with. Scenes very similar to this have been witnessed at times in Indian Christian congregations, during seasons of conviction and revival.

Their deeds] Cf. Rom. viii. 13; Col. iii. 9. It may denote all kinds of unholy doings and practices; but the context suggests that it refers specially to 'deeds' connected with magic, sorcery, and exorcism, practised in secret even after a profession of Christianity. The word translated 'deeds' is shewn by inscriptions to have been employed as a technical term for magical prescriptions. It is cognate, too, with the verb 'practised' in the next verse. The Indian Church must purge itself entirely from all lingering heathen superstitions, such as the wearing of charms, trust in magical formulae, belief in 'lucky days' for marriages, etc.

19. Not a few, etc.] This refers, most likely, to outsiders, the pagan sorcerers and professors of magic. A true revival in the Christian Church will affect the non-Christian world around.

Curious arts] The word so rendered only occurs again in 1 Tim. v. 13 (busybodies). It is used of persons who neglect their proper duties and pry into unnecessary things. As the margin

20 of silver. So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

shews, it is also used (classically) in the sense of 'magical arts'. Ephesus had a world-wide fame as the home of magic. Mysterious symbols, known as 'Ephesian letters', were regarded as possessing supernatural power. They were worn as charms and amulets, and uttered as incantations. In India, we have abundance of similar superstitions. Védic texts (mantras) are used as collections of magical sounds and letters, and credited with supernatural power. The mystical letters or syllables known as 'bijas'; the mysterious designs drawn on tablets, called 'yantras'; the charms or amulets inscribed with formulae termed 'kavacas'; these and countless other talismans, incantations, etc., are regarded as wielding occult powers, and are used for an infinite variety of purposes.

Their books] That is, manuscripts, books, or rolls containing their mystic 'Ephesian letters', with formulae and prescriptions for exorcism, for working good or evil to others, etc. Many of us have seen such 'books' and palm-leaf writings in this country.

Burned them] The imperfect tense makes the scene graphic. 'They kept burning them', throwing them one by one into the bonfire which had been lighted for the purpose. This also, on a smaller scale, has been repeated in this land. Sorcerers have been known to burn their occult books; idolaters to break their idols; and demon priests to deliver up their stock-in-trade and to consign to the flames their grotesque devil-dancing costumes, after their conversion to Christianity.

Counted] An unusual verb, peculiar to this verse in the New Testament. It conveys the idea of 'reckoning item by item'.

Fifty thousand pieces of silver] The Greek system of coinage would be in vogue, as Ephesus was a Greek colony. We may conclude, therefore, that the Attic drachma is the unit indicated. Twenty-four of these represent in value a little more than £1; so that the total represented by the books was about £2,000, or Rs 30,000 (modern reckoning). As however, money had a far greater proportional value in Roman days, the sum would represent a much larger figure in modern times.

Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed **21** in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have

20. Grew . . . and prevailed] Continually (imperfect tenses). The Gospel triumphed more and more over all the forces of magic and superstition. This is one of those victorious statements with which St. Luke loves to conclude a special period of evangelistic work (vi. 7; ix. 31; xi. 24-26; xii. 24; xiii. 49; xvi. 5). They are usually followed by a fresh outbreak of Satanic malice.

21. After these things were ended,] Literally 'were fulfilled'. Some see in these words the climax of St. Paul's evangelistic work in the Roman East and regard them as marking a turning point in the history. They may, however, be regarded as specially indicating the completion of the triumph of the Gospel over Ephesian magic and the firm establishment of the church there.

Purposed in the spirit,] He 'set it (firmly) in his spirit', the whole plan, however, being conceived in the Holy Ghost.

When he had passed through] Itinerated there on a preaching tour (viii. 4, note).

Macedonia and Achaia,] See xvi. 9; xviii. 12, notes. Many commentators, relying on the 'prima facie' meaning of the notices in 2 Cor. ii. 1; xii. 14; xiii. 1, consider that St. Paul paid a short visit to Corinth during his period of residence in Ephesus. But these passages really predicate nothing more than an intention, 2 Cor. xiii. 1, meaning, probably, 'this is the third time I am purposing to come to you' (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 14); and the narrative of the Acts is decidedly against any such interruption to his Ephesian work (vv. 9, 10). This verse accords with 1 Cor. xvi. 5-9, except that the riot which ensued in Ephesus caused him to leave early in the year instead of after Pentecost, as he had intended. His plan, as here indicated, shows an alteration of a previous determination (2 Cor. i. 16) to travel to Corinth direct and thence to Macedonia—the alteration being due to disturbing news received from Corinth (2 Cor. i. 23) through faithful Corinthian friends, Stephanas,

22 been there, I must also see Rome. And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

Fortunatus, and Achaiacus (1 Cor. xvi. 17), following upon unsatisfactory information already received from others (1 Cor. i. 11).

It was at this stage that the apostle wrote and despatched his First Epistle to the Corinthians, possibly by Titus (2 Cor. vii. 14-15), or by Stephanas and his party when they returned home from Ephesus. That Epistle reflects some of the stormy scenes of the Ephesian work (1 Cor. xv. 32; xvi. 9), as well as its success. Some are of opinion that the Epistle to the Galatians was also written from Corinth, on the receipt of bad news of the work of Judaizers there after his own departure (See xviii. 23, note).

To go to Jerusalem,] A purpose finally accomplished in xxi. 17.

I must also see Rome] See xviii. 2; note; and of Rom. i. 13-15; xv. 22-3. Thus Rome was the destination which he now had full in view; and his aspirations extended to Spain also (Rom. xv. 24).

22. Into Macedonia] The special mission was connected, in part at least, with the 'collections for the saints' at Jerusalem which the apostle was urging forward at this time with a view to Christian unity (Cf. xi. 30, note). See 2 Cor. viii. 1-5. Timothy had instructions to proceed, afterwards, to Corinth also (1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10-11), and the church there was advised of his expected arrival and exhorted to receive him kindly. As events happened, however, he had not yet left Macedonia when St. Paul himself arrived there (2 Cor. i. 1).

Timothy] See xvi. 1, note. We have had no mention of him since his presence at Corinth in xviii. 5. He may, however, have remained in St. Paul's company since then till now.

Erastus] Probably to be identified with the person of that name in 2 Tim. iv. 20, where also he appears as St. Paul's

And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines of ¹ Diana, brought no little business unto the

fellow-worker, having recently proceeded to Corinth at the time of the latter's second Roman imprisonment. He is, it would seem, to be distinguished from the Erastus of Rom. xvi. 23, since the office of 'treasurer of the city' (of Corinth), if he still held it, would hardly be compatible with an itinerant missionary life. f

23. No small stir] See xii. 18. The noun is cognate with the verb of xv. 24; xvii. 8, 13; (trouble) St. Paul the missionary had to face many 'stirs'.

The Way] See ix. 2, note.

24. Demetrius] The name occurs again in 3 John 12. It was a fairly common one, and we are scarcely justified in assuming the identity of the two on the ground of their connexion with Ephesus. It would require us to believe that this fierce opponent afterwards became a most exemplary Christian. This, of course, is by no means impossible, as witness St. Paul's own case.

A silversmith] There is evidence from inscriptions that various trade guilds existed in Ephesus and other Asian cities. This man was clearly a wealthy and influential person, probably master of the guild.

Which made silver shrines] For 'Diana' and her temple, see v. 27, notes. These shrines were miniature models, varying in size, of the goddess represented as seated in a niche, or shrine, with lions or stags beside her. They were fashioned not in silver only, but also in marble and terra-cotta, and specimens are still extant. They were purchased by votaries chiefly for the purpose of dedicating them as votive offerings to the temple; though many were, doubtless, also carried away by worshippers as household idols. They may have been worn, too, in certain cases, as amulets. Miniature representations of Hindu gods are, similarly, bought for *pūjā* purposes.

25 craftsmen; whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know
 26 that by this business we have our wealth. And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no
 27 gods, which are made with hands: and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess ^{1 Gr. *Artemis*.} ¹ Diana be made of no account, and that she should even:be deposed from her magnificence,

Business] See xvi. 19 (gain). Here, as there, vested interests were at stake.

Craftsmen] The word occurs again only in Heb. xi. 10; Rev. xviii. 22. It denotes here, like our own word 'artisans', workers in various metals, stone, wood, etc. Compare the word *Kam-mâlâr*, used with a like significance in South India.

25. Gathered together,] The same verb as in xii. 12, but how different an assembly. There would be a 'guild-house' for such public gatherings of the trades.

The workmen of like occupation] Members of all the associated trades affected.

Business] See v. 24; xvi. 16.

Our wealth] A word peculiar to this verse. It might be rendered 'easy means of livelihood'.

26. Almost throughout all Asia] A strong testimony, because a hostile one, to the wide dissemination of the Gospel (Cf. ch. v. 28).

Hath persuaded] See xvii. 4, note.

27. Is there danger] A verb in the Greek, a Paulo-Lukan one (Luke viii. 23; v. 40; 1 Cor. xv. 30). Their livelihood was jeopardized by the progress of the Gospel.

whom all Asia and ¹ the world worship-
 peth. And when they heard this, they were 1 Gr. the in-
 habited earth. 28

Our trade] Literally, 'our share', as though 'our share of business and its profits', as derived from the Ephesian cult.

The temple] This was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It had been originally built on the site of an ancient shrine on a magnificent scale, but was burnt down on the very night when Alexander the Great was born (356 B.C.). It was replaced by a still grander one erected by special contributions from the whole of 'Asia'. It was 425 ft. in length and 220 in breadth, its 127 Ionic columns, each the gift of a king, being no less than sixty ft. high. It was constantly embellished with new decorations, ornate buildings, statues, and pictures. It stood a visible monument of the power and prevalence of paganism; just as, in our own India, on a smaller scale, the temples of Benares and the more pretentious temples of South India at Conjeevaram, Srirangam, and Madura are to-day the outward display of popular heathen cults.

Connected with the great Ephesian temple was a large body of priests, 'déva-dásis' (dancing and singing women), acrobats, etc.; and its ritual was debased by many gross immoralities which were shielded by the sanctions of religion. The application of this to Hindu Saktism, or the worship of female deities, as well as to the system of dancing girls, etc., is only too obvious.

The great goddess Diana] 'Diana' is the Latin name of the Greek Artemis (margin), the goddess of hunting, usually represented with a bow and quiver, and accompanied by two white stags. Sometimes she is depicted as holding a lion by one hand and a panther by the other. The Ephesian goddess, however, though the name Artemis had been conferred upon her through Greek influence, was really the deity of an indigenous Asiatic cult, the impersonation of the vitality and reproductive power of nature. She was represented by a rude idol, in shape partly human, the upper part being that of a woman, while the lower part was merely an upright block,

filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is
 29 ^{1 Gr. Artemis.} Diana of the Ephesians. And the city
 was filled with the confusion: and they
 rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized
 Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's

without distinction of legs or feet, covered with symbols and figures of animals. Stags were shewn on either side of her.

Magnificence] The word is used of a truer 'majesty' in Luke ix. 43; 2 Pet. i. 16.

All Asia and the world worshippeth] No idle boast; but, as Bengel well says, 'a multitude of men going astray after error do not make the false thing true'. Worshippers were attracted to Ephesus in thousands from far and wide, and, at the annual 'Artemisia' or festival held in honour of the goddess, the concourse was enormous. Those who have seen the great festivals held periodically at places of pilgrimage in India, e.g. that held at Allahabad at the junction of the Ganges and the Jumna, can form an idea of the similar gatherings at Ephesus.

28. Cried out] Imperfect tense, 'continued crying out'. The Bezan text adds 'and ran into the street'.

Great is Diana of the Ephesians] The Bezan text reads 'Great Artemis of the Ephesians', which will represent not a statement like that of the text, but a cry of religious fervour and adoration, 'Great Artemis! Great Artemis!' This would correspond, largely, with the similar cries, half devotional, half combative, of an excited Hindu crowd, 'Râma, Râma! jaya, jaya!'—'Siva, Siva! jaya, jaya!'

29. Confusion] A noun peculiar to this verse, cognate with the verb 'confound' of ii. 6; ix. 22; v. 32.

Rushed] See vii. 57, note.

With one accord] See i. 14, note; and cf. vii. 57; xviii. 12.

The theatre] An immense circular enclosure, excavated in the hill side, with a diameter of no less than 495 ft., capable of holding, on the lowest computation, 24,500 people. St. Paul

companions in travel. And when Paul was minded to 30 enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

uses this very word (spectacle, theatre) in writing from Ephesus to Corinth (1 Cor. iv. 9).

Having seized] See vi. 12, note. We are not told whether they fell in with these men by accident or dragged them out from somewhere as persons known to be associated with the new propaganda.

Gaius] This name is borne, in addition to the Macedonian here in question, by Gaius of Derbe (xx. 4), Gaius of Corinth (1 Cor. i. 14; Rom. xvi. 23), and the Gaius to whom St. John addressed his Third Epistle (3 John i). We know nothing further of this man.

Aristarchus] A native of Thessalonica (xx. 4; xxvii. 2). Our first notice of him occurs here. He was a converted Jew (Col. iv. 10-11). He is found in St. Paul's company on the return journey from his third missionary tour (xx. 4), and seems to have accompanied him to Jerusalem, since we find him going with the apostle from Caesarea to Rome (xxvii. 2). He remained with him during part or the whole of his first Roman imprisonment, possibly sharing his bonds (Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24). After that, we lose sight of him. Both he and Gaius were converted, most likely, during St. Paul's first visit to Macedonia (ch. xvi): It is interesting and instructive to us in India to find new converts so soon busy at work as missionaries. ↵

Companions in travel] One word in the Greek, occurring again only in 2 Cor. viii. 19. It gives the idea of persons travelling abroad together. They were all foreign missionaries for the Gospel's sake. ¶

30. The people] As though, 'the mob' (demos). See xii. 22; xvii. 5. Many understand 1 Cor. xv. 32 to refer to this excited crowd as 'wild beasts'.

Suffered him not] They knew that his life would be in imminent danger if he shewed himself to the mob.

- 31** And certain also of the ¹ chief officers of Asia, being his friends, sent unto him, and besought him <sup>1 Gr. Asi-
arche.</sup> not to adventure himself into the theatre.
- 32** Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part

31. The chief officers of Asia] 'The Asiarchs' (margin). Each province had an association for promoting the worship of Rome and the emperors (Introd. IV. 4), and the chief officers of such associations were styled after the name of their province, 'Syriarch', 'Galatarch', 'Asiarch', etc. They probably acted as high priests of the temples erected for emperor worship, and they certainly presided over the public games which were held in connexion with provincial festivals. Thus these Asiarchs were most important provincial officials, who assembled in council at intervals to manage such business of the province of Asia as appertained to emperor worship and public games. It has been suggested that they had gathered in Ephesus at that time for such a purpose, and that possibly a great festival was then being held.

Being his friends] The apostle usually met with toleration from the representatives of the imperial policy (Introd. IV. 4). These Asiarchs were kindly disposed to him, and he may have had intercourse with them and laid his message before them. As a Roman citizen, he was entitled to all due protection from imperial officers.

Besought] With some amount of importunity (imperfect tense).

Not to adventure himself] Literally, 'not to give himself (up)'. It would be like courting death.

32. Cried] Imperfect tense, as in v. 28. The cries were continuous and confused.

The assembly] The usual Greek expression for a public gathering. It is the word which has been adopted by Christianity as 'church' (ecclesia). See ch. v. 11, note.

Was in confusion] See v. 29, note

knew not wherefore they were come together. ¹ And they 33
 brought Alexander out of the multitude,
 the Jews putting him forward. And Alex-
 ander beckoned with the hand, and would
 have made a defence unto the people. But
 when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with
 one voice about the space of two hours cried out,

¹ Or, *And
 some of the
 multitude in-
 structed Alex-
 ander*

34

33. They brought] The exact meaning is not very clear. The verb means 'to put together', and is used in various senses (e.g. of 'proving' in ix. 22; and of 'concluding' in xvi. 10). The reading of the text implies a *united* bringing of Alexander out of the multitude. That of the margin, 'instructed', suggests that the Jews gave him instructions to go forward to the stage of the theatre and to harangue the crowd from thence with a view to dissociating them from Paul and his preaching.

Alexander] Some identify him with the person of the same name mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 14, 'the coppersmith'; but the identification is purely conjectural. The name was a very common one.

The Jews putting him forward] They thrust him forward as their spokesman and advocate, fearing lest the fact of Paul being a Jew might bring trouble on themselves. The verb is Lukan (Luke xxi. 30).

Beckoned, etc.] See xii. 17; xiii. 16; xxi. 40.

Made a defence] A Paulo-Lukan verb (Luke xii. 11; xxi. 14; Acts xxiv. 10; xxv. 8; xxvi. 1-2, 24; Rom. ii. 15; 2 Cor. xii. 19). His object was to defend the Jews against the suspicion of complicity in the new propaganda. From this word, we get our own term 'apology'. Alexander stood forward as a Jewish apologist.

People] See v. 30.

34. When they perceived] By his general appearance. The Jew is marked all the world over. The general populace

35 Great is ¹ Diana of the Ephesians. And when the townclerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, ^{1 Gr. Artemis.} Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great ¹ Diana, and of the *image*

would scarcely discriminate between Paul the Jew and the other members of his community.

Great is Diana, etc.] See v. 28. The Bezan text has the same reading here as there, and seems to give the best sense.

35. The townclerk] Ephesus, under the Romans, was allowed the rights of a 'free' city, i.e. to retain its own democratic municipal constitution, with its 'ecclesia' or 'popular assembly', which had a senate of leading citizens for ordinary executive purposes. While the Asiarchs were *provincial* officials, with special functions, these senators, acting for the people, dealt with *municipal* affairs. The townclerk or recorder was secretary of the ecclesia (and its senate), and was responsible for drafting its decrees and for sealing them with the public seal. He was the most important *local* official in Ephesus, and was in constant contact, on behalf of the municipal government, with the court of the proconsul, the Roman governor who represented the suzerain power. He would be held responsible by the governor for the peace of the city.

Quieted] A verb only used here and in v. 36. It means 'to put in order', 'to repress', and so 'to quieten'.

Temple-keeper] Literally 'temple-sweeper', or 'sacristan' (*νεωκόπος*). We may render 'temple-warden'. The title was usually given to cities where temples were established for emperor worship, and is found to have been more commonly used of Ephesus than of any other place. There was one such temple for emperor worship in Ephesus at this time, and others were built later. Thus, in respect of the imperial cult alone, Ephesus was entitled to the distinctive title. But evidence is now forthcoming from inscriptions to shew

which fell down from ¹Jupiter? Seeing then that **36** these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. For ¹Or, *heaven* **37** ye have brought *hither* these men, which are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.

that the city bore the title also in respect of her worship of Artemis. One inscription describes it as 'doubly temple-warden of the emperors and warden of Artemis'. It was as though Calcutta were to be called 'temple-warden of Káli', or Rámésvara 'temple-warden of Ráma'. The townclerk used the title which would best appeal to the sense of dignity in his hearers.

The great Diana] See v. 27, note. Here, again, he used the very expression which they had been so vigorously vociferating for two hours.

The (image) which fell down from Jupiter] The image of Artemis (v. 27) was popularly supposed to have fallen miraculously from the sky (see margin). The same idea prevailed about other images, rough stones, etc., which were worshipped in various places; e.g. the image of Athena on the Athenian Acropolis. The origin of such superstitions was probably that meteorites, after falling to the earth, were regarded as deities who had miraculously descended from heaven.

36. Quiet] Participle of the verb used in v. 35.

Rash] An adjective found again only in 2 Tim. iii. 4 (headstrong), and so Paulo-Lukan. It denotes headlong and thoughtless haste.

37. Robbers of temples] This compound word occurs only here, but a cognate noun is found in Rom. ii. 22, meaning 'sacrilege'. If taken literally, (robbers of temples), we have to bear in mind that, besides the wealth and jewels connected with the temple itself, it was used as the safe repository of treasure by many of the citizens. Robbery of the wealth and jewels belonging to Hindu temples is by no means an unknown thing in our own days. Possibly, in their ignorance and frenzy,

- 38 If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man,
 1 the courts are open, and there are pro-^{1 Or, court days are kept}
 39 consuls: let them accuse one another. But if ye

many of the crowd had imagined that St. Paul and his companions were actually bent on temple robbery. We need not suppose, however, that the word means more than sacrilegious in its general sense. The missionaries had not been guilty in act of wantonly insulting the Ephesian cult.

Blasphemers of our goddess] That is, 'men using insulting language about her'. This relates to words, as the former expression refers to deeds. Inscriptions shew that both these were indictable offences at Ephesus, punishable with severe penalties. While it is often necessary to point out plainly the sin of idolatry, evangelists should avoid what savours of abusive speaking about other religions and cults.

38. The courts are open] The word rendered 'courts' really means 'belonging to the agora' (cf. xvii. 5, note), and gets its forensic sense from the fact that magistrates in Greek cities were wont to hold their courts in the agora (xvi. 19, note). It is really an adjective, and we must understand some noun like 'sessions' or 'days' (see margin). This same expression is used by Josephus (Antiq. xiv. 10. 21) of a proconsul 'holding a court'. We need not suppose that sessions were actually going on at the moment in the proconsul's court. It was as though the townclerk said, 'There are assizes at stated times, and you may take legal action there'.

Proconsuls] See xiii. 7; xviii. 12. Like Cyprus and Achaia, Asia was a senatorial province, and the correct title is here employed. Of course, there was only one proconsul or governor of Asia, and we are to regard the townclerk's words as used in a colloquial sense, 'There are such persons as proconsuls—so take your cause to the governor's court'.

Let them accuse] A verb often used in a legal sense, 'to lay a charge' (v. 40; xxiii. 28-9; xxvi. 2, 7; Rom. viii. 33).

seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. For indeed we are in danger to be ^{1 Or accus-} accused concerning this ^{ed of riot concerning this} day's riot, there being no cause *for it*; and ^{day} as touching it we shall not be able to give account 40

39. If ye seek anything about other matters] That is, 'If ye seek anything about matters other than those of which the proconsul can legally take cognizance', matters more properly relating to municipal procedure. The great Vatican MS. and the Bezan text, however, read 'if ye seek anything further' (omitting 'other matters'), which may be interpreted as meaning either 'any further inquiry' or 'anything beyond the accusation of an individual, anything relating to public order generally'.

The regular assembly] The adjective 'regular' may also be translated 'lawful' (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 21, its only other occurrence in the New Testament, 'under law'). The 'ecclesia', or 'popular assembly' of Ephesian citizens (v. 35, note) was allowed by the Romans to meet on certain fixed days for the transaction of municipal affairs. It is to such stated and constitutional gatherings that reference is here made. All matters relating to the public welfare of the city could be discussed there, and complaints affecting them lodged. The phrase implies a tacit rebuke of the irregularity of their disorderly 'assembly' (v. 32) on the present occasion.

40. We are in danger] See v. 27, note.

To be accused] See v. 38, note. The Romans looked with a jealous eye on all unauthorized assemblies, as likely to have a political bearing.

Riot] The same word as that rendered 'dissension' in xv. 2; xxiii. 7, 10, but translated 'insurrection' in Mark xv. 7; Luke xxiii. 19, 25; Acts xxiv. 5. They were liable to be charged with making a seditious insurrection. The Romans, like any other firm government, would feel bound to repress sedition and rioting.

Concourse] The word is only used again in xxiii. 12, of the Jewish conspirators forming themselves into a 'band' to slay

41 of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Paul. There are classical precedents for regarding it as connoting 'a seditious concourse'.

41. Dismissed] Cf. xiii. 3, note. He brought the proceedings to a close by pronouncing the usual technical words for dismissal.

Assembly] See v. 32. As in the case of Gamaliel, we see how great an influence one wise man can exert at critical junctures (ch. v. 40).

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XIX

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) St. Paul's initial work in Ephesus. vv. 1-7. In the church.
- (2) St. Paul's next ,, vv. 8-9. In the synagogue.
- (3) St. Paul's extended ,, vv. 10-20. Among the general population.
- (4) St. Paul's last ,, vv. 21-41. The riot.

II. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) A three-fold baptism. vv. 1-7.
 - (a) John's baptism. v. 3. Unto repentance.
 - (b) The Church's baptism. v. 5. Unto faith and the remission of sins.
 - (c) The Spirit's baptism. v. 6. Unto power.
 - Now two-fold (i). Baptism by water.
 - (ii). Baptism by the Holy Ghost and by fire.
- (2) A typical campaign.
 - (a) The church quickened and empowered. vv. 1-7.
 - (b) The world stirred and attracted. vv. 8-20.
 - (c) The enemy aroused and alarmed. vv. 23-41.
- (3) The power of the Gospel.
 - (a) It transforms nominal Christians. vv. 1-7.
 - (b) It confutes religious formalism. vv. 8-9.
 - (c) It overcomes sorcery and magic. vv. 11-19.
 - (d) It shakes idolatry and superstition. vv. 23-41.

And after the uproar was ceased, Paul having sent 1
for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of
them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. And 2

CHAPTER XX

1-6. TOUR IN MACEDONIA AND GREECE

1. Uproar] Cf. xxi. 34; xxiv. 18, for the same word, which only occurs elsewhere in Matt. xxvi. 5; xxvii. 24; Mark v. 38; xiv. 2. The cognate verb is found in xvii. 5, which see. It marks the tumultuous nature of the 'riot' (xix. 40).

Exhorted] With the further meaning also of 'encouraged'. See ix. 31; xi. 23; xiv. 22; xvi. 40. /

To go into Macedonia] According to his declared intention (xix. 21), though his departure was expedited by the riot. He sailed by a coasting vessel, trans-shipping at Troas, where he tarried for a time expecting Titus who had been despatched on special business to Corinth, probably bearing with him the First Epistle to the Corinthians. While he waited for Titus, special opportunities presented themselves for work in Troas (2 Cor. ii. 12). But on account of his anxiety for news from Corinth, aggravated, it would seem, by a serious illness and by distress about the condition of the Galatian churches (2 Cor. i. 8-10), he curtailed his campaign in Troas and passed on to Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 13).

Ramsay suggests that Titus, unable to cross the open sea out of the sailing season, had to take a coasting voyage via Macedonia, and so was much delayed. Of course, also, St. Paul had arrived at Troas much earlier than had been originally contemplated. The two finally met in Macedonia, probably in Philippi (2 Cor. vii. 5-7). It is strange that Titus is not mentioned in the Acts, as he plays so important a part in the third missionary journey and afterwards. He was clearly a Greek. In Macedonia, Paul met also Timothy again, possibly at Thessalonica (see xix. 22, note).

Gone through] See viii. 4, note. His itinerating tour would, of course, include Philippi, Beroea, and Thessalonica,—and

when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. 3 And when he had spent three months *there*, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews, as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return

seems to have been extended as far as Illyricum, a province bordering on the Adriatic Sea, north of Macedonia (Rom. xv. 19). His attention was much occupied at this time in collecting alms from the Gentile churches for the poor Christians at Jerusalem. The summer and autumn were spent over this Macedonian tour. To this period must be assigned his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, despatched by Titus, who gladly undertook a second journey to Corinth, accompanied by two others, of whom 'the brother whose praise in the Gospel is spread through all the churches' is popularly supposed (though without actual proof) to be St. Luke (2 Cor. viii. 16-24). They were specially charged to push on the collections for Jerusalem. To this period, too, many assign the Epistle to the Galatians, largely on linguistic and other grounds (But see xviii. 23; xix. 10, notes).

Given them much exhortation] See v. 1, and references *there*. He seems to have felt that he was giving his last messages of advice and cheer to beloved converts, and so prolonged his discourses.

Came into Greece] As he had all along intended (xix. 21). Greece means the Roman province of Achaia (xviii. 12, note). We do not know whether he revisited Athens or not, but we know that Corinth was his place of residence, Gaius being his host (Rom. xvi. 23).

3. Three months] That is, December, January, and February. During this time, he wrote and despatched his great Epistle to the Romans sending it by Phoebe (Rom. xvi. 1, 2). Timothy and others united with him in sending greetings to the Roman Christians (Rom. xvi. 21-3). We gather from its pages that his mind was set on going to Rome and the West, as also that he anticipated trouble in Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 22-33).

through Macedonia. And there accompanied him ⁴ as far as Asia Sopater of Berea, *the son of* Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe,

1. Many ancient authorities omit *as far as Asia*.

A plot] See ix. 24, note.

As he was about to set sail] For 'set sail' see xiii. 13, note. He was about to embark in a pilgrim ship for Syria, in order to keep the Passover in Jerusalem. The Corinthian Jews, whose enmity was so implacable (xviii. 6, 12), had probably planned to get rid of him during the voyage. It would be easy, in a crowded ship, to push a man overboard. The Bezan text makes his leaving Corinth the consequence of a plot to destroy him in that city, but this is unlikely.

Determined] Literally, 'became of opinion'. The Bezan text says, 'The Spirit bade him return'.

Through Macedonia] Travelling, most probably, by sea. He 'changed his ship', so to speak, and took another and circuitous route, giving up the idea of keeping the Passover in Jerusalem. Some, however, think that he travelled by land to Macedonia.

4. Accompanied] A verb peculiar to this verse. We gather that this representative party must have been delegates of the Gentile churches, entrusted with contributions for the poor Christians of Jerusalem. St. Paul had been urging these collections strongly in Galatia (1 Cor. xvi. 1), Macedonia (2 Cor. viii. 1-4), Achaia (1 Cor. xvi. 1-4; 2 Cor. viii. 6-24), and doubtless in Asia also. He seems to have attached the greatest importance to them as a means of promoting unity between Jew and Gentile Christians. Though these collections are not specifically mentioned in the Acts, they are alluded to in xxiv. 17 (cf. Rom. xv. 25). He had himself suggested that the offerings should be entrusted to chosen delegates (1 Cor. xvi. 3-4), to travel in his company.

As far as Asia] The two oldest manuscripts omit these words (see margin), and the omission simplifies the passage, as we may then understand that the delegates 'accompanied him

5 and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. But these ¹ had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread,

¹ Many ancient authorities read *came, and were waiting.*

(on his journey to Jerusalem)'. We know that Trophimus went all the way (xxi. 29), and, presumably, Luke and Aristarchus also (xxvii. 2). The inference is, if we accept the view that the delegates were in charge of the church contributions, that the rest of the party did so also. Even if we retain the words, according to many ancient authorities, it does not follow that the delegates went no further than Asia. Some commentators consider that the Asian deputies, Tychicus and Trophimus, did not come to Corinth, but had been instructed to meet the party at Troas, and that, on this account, the others are mentioned, in contradistinction, as going 'as far as Asia' to meet them. Their names would then be regarded as added at the end to make the list of deputies complete.

Sopater of Beroea] It is doubtful if he is to be identified with the Sosipater of Rom. xvi. 21, who was with St. Paul at Corinth. The mention of his being 'the son of Pyrrhus' may be intended to distinguish him from others of the same name; or it may mark his respectable parentage.

Aristarchus] See xix. 29, note.

Secundus] We know nothing further of him. The three enumerated so far were clearly the Macedonian delegates. St. Luke himself may have been entrusted with the Philippian contributions when he joined the party at that city (v. 6), as only Beroea and Thessalonica are mentioned in this verse.

Gaius of Derbe] For others of the same name, see xix. 29, note.

Timothy] Of Lystra (xvi. 1). He and Gaius may have been the Galatian delegates.

Tychicus] We find him, later, a valued fellow-worker with St. Paul at Rome, during the latter's first imprisonment there. To him were entrusted the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians,

and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days.

and Philemon (Eph. vi. 21-2; Col. iv. 7-8). At a subsequent date, St. Paul speaks of possibly sending him to relieve Titus at Crete (Titus iii. 12); and he is mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 12 as having been recently sent by the apostle on a special mission to Ephesus. He was most probably an Ephesian.

Trophimus] He accompanied St. Paul to Jerusalem, and it was his presence there which led to the tumult in the temple (xxi. 29). He was an Ephesian. The only other occurrence of his name is in 2 Tim. iv. 20, where he is said to have been left by the apostle at Miletus sick on the eve of St. Paul's second Roman imprisonment. He and Tychicus were the Asian delegates, and many are of opinion that, though their names are included in this list, they were not actually present at Corinth, but joined the party in Asia. This opinion is based on the understanding that the 'these' of v. 5 only refers to the two mentioned last in the list. They consider that the original plan had been to pick them up at Ephesus in the pilgrim ship bound for the Passover, but that the Jewish plot led to a change of plan and that a message was despatched to them to come to Troas instead. We notice that no Achaian delegates are mentioned by name. Ramsay suggests that the Corinthians may have entrusted their contributions to St. Paul himself (1 Cor. xvi. 3-4). Or may it not be possible that Titus was their representative? His name is, for some reason, left unmentioned in the Acts, though he is known to have been one of St. Paul's most trusted fellow-workers, and to have been in close touch with the church in Corinth.

5. These] Taken by some to refer only to the two Asian delegates last mentioned, Tychicus and Trophimus (v. 4, note), who were now, because of a change of plans, to meet the party at Troas instead of Ephesus.

It may, however, without discrepancy, be regarded as indicating the whole party.

Had gone before and were waiting] We may render the words, 'went before and continued waiting'. This rendering

7 And upon the first day of the week, when we

will then tell us either (1) that Tychicus and Trophimus (if we regard the 'these' as relating only to them) went beforehand to Troas and awaited the arrival of the rest; or (2) that the delegates enumerated in v. 4, having accompanied the apostle as far as Macedonia, left him to go on to Philippi and follow them later to Asia while they themselves crossed at once from Neapolis (xvi. 11) to Troas. Many important manuscripts, however, read 'came' instead of 'went before' (see margin), in which case we are most likely meant to understand, 'Now these (delegates of Asia) came (from Ephesus, to meet us) and continued waiting for us at Troas'.

6. We] Here we mark the reappearance of St. Luke the writer, and the resumption of the 'we' sections. We saw him last at Philippi (xvi. 17-18). St. Paul evidently met him there again, and he had possibly continued there in the interim. The 'we' here includes at least St. Paul and St. Luke, and may include the delegates also.

Sailed away] See xv. 39, note.

From Philippi] St. Paul's third visit to that city (xvi. 12; xx. 1-2). His Epistle to the Christians there shews what a warm place they held in his affections (Phil. i. 7; ii. 17).

The days of unleavened bread] The Jewish Passover season. (xii. 4, note). St. Paul still, in measure, conformed to Jewish religious customs (see xviii. 18, note; and cf. xxvii. 9); but there was, no doubt, a Christian complexion now in his observance of such feasts (1 Cor. v. 6-8). As the Philippian Christians were, for the most part Gentiles (xvi. 12-13), we may well believe that he commemorated with them the great fact of our redemption by Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb. If this event occurred, as is most probable (see Chronological Table), in A.D. 57, the Feast of the Passover fell in that year on Thursday, April 7, and lasted till April 14. This would give us April 15, Friday, as the earliest possible date for the actual start. On this hypothesis, Ramsay has constructed a diary of the subsequent voyage, and supposes the party to have finally

were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow ;

reached Caesarea on May 14, well in time for Pentecost which fell that year on May 28. We cannot, of course, assert the perfect accuracy of such a diary, but at least it gives us an approximation to the facts of the case.

Troas] See xvi. 8, note.

In five days] Contrast the short passage of two days from Troas to Neapolis (xvi. 11). The wind was, clearly, unfavourable on this occasion, and calms were frequent,—so that they did not reach Troas till the fifth day.

Tarried seven days] They had to trans-ship there, and were delayed in finding a suitable vessel for the rest of the journey. The delay allowed them to spend the Lord's Day with the Christians of Troas and to strengthen the church there.

7-12. SUNDAY AT TROAS. EUTYCHUS

7. The first day of the week] An incidental notice of the Christian observance of Sunday (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 2).

Were gathered together] See xiii. 44, note ; and cf. also v. 8.

To break bread] See ii. 46, note. It is the Christian 'Agape' which is intended, with the commemorative feast of Holy Communion. We note the continuance of the sacred custom mentioned in ch. ii.

Discoursed] At considerable length (imperfect tense). It is the verb usually employed of dialectical addresses (xvii. 2, 17 ; xviii. 4, 19 ; xix. 8-9). In addressing Christians, of course, his 'reasoning' would be chiefly of a hortative type, and may have been, to some extent, of a conversational kind.

Prolonged his speech] This verb is found only here. Evidently, he felt the importance of the occasion and regarded it as a last message (v. 2, note).

Midnight] See xvi. 25, note.

8 and prolonged his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where we
 9 were gathered together. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep, he fell down from
 10 the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him

8. Lights] The Greek word means 'lamps'.

Upper chamber] See i. 13; ix. 37, 39.

9. The window] The word occurs only here and in 2 Cor. xi. 33. It denotes an opening in the wall, with a wooden door, wide open on this occasion for the sake of air. We are familiar with such 'windows' in this land. As Eutychus sat on the window-sill, we may conclude that the room was crowded with people.

Eutychus] We know nothing of him beyond what is here recorded. His name means 'fortunate' or 'prosperous'. /

Borne down with deep sleep] The tense of the verb (present participle) points to his being gradually overcome with sleep, in spite of struggles to keep awake. The heat occasioned by so many lamps would account for his drowsiness.

Discoursed yet longer] See v. 7, note.

Being borne down by his sleep] Here the tense changes (aorist participle), and shews us the young man finally overcome by sleep, unable to struggle against it any longer.

Was taken up dead] The statement is explicit. Life had actually expired. Contrast the statement of xiv. 19-20, where death had not ensued.

10. Fell on him] Cf. 1 Kings xvii. 21-2; 2 Kings iv. 34.

Embracing him] A verb occurring only here. The act was symbolical alike of sympathy, assistance, and the impartation of something.

said, **Make ye no ado**; for his life is in him. And **11** when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought **12** the lad alive, and were not a little comforted.

But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, **13** there intending to take in Paul: for so ^{1 Or, on foot.} had he appointed, intending himself to go ¹ by land.

Make ye no ado] Cf. Matt. ix. 23; Mark v. 39, where the same verb occurs (make a tumult). It is cognate with the noun of v. 1 (uproar), and marks the loud demonstrations of grief which characterize the East. Cf. ix. 39.

His life is in him] Meaning 'has returned to him'. Cf. Mark v. 39. The incident is parallel with the miraculous restoration to life of Dorcas (ix. 40-1). /

11. Had broken the bread] See v. 7, and references there. The Agape on this occasion was clearly delayed till shortly after midnight by the abnormal length of the apostle's discourse. Some consider that the words 'had broken the bread' refer to the rite of Holy Communion, while the following expression 'and eaten' alludes to the Agape, or love-feast, which succeeded. As in the case of the Last Supper, the two would be closely associated.

Talked with, etc.] This shews that dawn was still a long way off. The verb 'talked' denotes friendly intercourse and is Lukan in usage (Luke xxiv. 14-15; Acts xxiv. 26).

12. Brought the lad alive] The Bezan text adds, 'as they were taking farewell'. Whether it was into the upper room that they brought the lad, or to say goodbye to the departing apostle (as the Bezan reading suggests),—or whether it means that they brought him home to his friends, is not clear. /

13-17. FROM TROAS TO MILETUS

13. We] That is, St. Luke and the delegates, as we may fairly suppose.

14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and
15 came to Mitylene. And sailing from thence, we came

Going before] The same verb, in the same tense (aorist participle), as in v. 5. As there, so here, some ancient authorities read 'came' (or, went). St. Paul may have stayed behind for a little time to give last instructions to the church; and he had other reasons too.

Set sail] See xiii. 13, note.

Assos] An ancient city of Mysia, some miles east of Cape Lectum, a promontory which had to be rounded by the vessel on leaving Troas. It was an important coasting station, with a fair harbour. A Roman road connected it by land with Troas, the distance being about twenty miles. This was a short route compared with the detour by sea, and would be more quickly traversed.

Appointed] Or 'commanded' (cf. xviii. 2), their protests having probably evoked a very firm injunction.

To go by land] Literally 'to go afoot' (margin), by the short land route. Most likely, he felt the need of solitude and quiet. That is necessary to every Christian worker.

14. Met] See xvii. 18 (encountered). The tense is imperfect, as though the apostle had not actually finished his journey when they first sighted him.

Mitylene] The chief town of the island of Lesbos, about twelve miles from the coast of Asia. The run from Assos to Mitylene is about thirty miles. It was a town of some historical importance. We notice, from the runs of the ship, that it stopped every evening. The reason is that the prevailing wind in the Aegean in the summer months is from the north. It springs up in the early morning and drops in the late afternoon, so that sailing vessels are becalmed. Thus St. Paul's ship would start in the very early morning and anchor in the evening. St. Luke's notices of seaports, etc. betray his Greek interest in nautical matters (xiii. 4; xiv. 25; xvi. 11; xviii. 22; xx. 15; xxi. 3, 7; xxvii. 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 12, 41; xxviii. 11-13).

the following day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus. For

1 Many ancient authorities insert *having tarried at Trogyllium*

16

15. Sailing from] See xiii. 4, note.

Came] 'Arrived' (xvi. 1, note), as though 'at a point on the mainland' (Ramsay), a spot, most likely, near Cape Argennum in Lydia.

Chios] An island of some size (thirty-two miles long by eight to eighteen miles broad) separated from the Asian mainland by a channel which varies in breadth from five miles at its narrowest part. St. Paul's ship sailed down this channel. The island claimed to be the birth-place of the poet Homer.

Touched at] A technical nautical expression peculiar to this verse. Ramsay, however, renders 'we struck across (the more open sea) to Samos', and there are classical precedents for such a translation. If so, we are not to regard the ship as calling at the port of Samos. It was pushing on to try and reach Miletus that day.

Samos] An important Aegean island, separated by narrow straits from the Asian mainland,—a historic spot where the Greeks won a famous victory over the Persians. It was noted for its science and arts. St. Paul's vessel had to round the west point of Samos, and then bear inwards towards Miletus. The Bezan text, supported by other ancient authorities, adds 'and tarried at Trogyllium' (see margin). This is probably correct. Trogyllium is the promontory on the mainland, on the other side of the straits, opposite Samos, at the entrance of the Gulf of Ephesus. When the ship reached this point, the wind dropped, and they had to anchor for the night and forego their intention of pushing on the same day to Miletus.

Miletus] On the coast of Caria,—once the most famous of the Ionian cities. It had sunk, under the Romans, to a second-rate town, as the silting up of the river Menander gradually reduced its importance and finally rendered it useless as a port.

Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

- 17 ^{1 Or, pres-} And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, _{byters} and called to him the ¹ elders of the church.
- 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

In St. Paul's days, it was practically the port of Ephesus, which city had long eclipsed Miletus. The run from Trogyllium was only about twenty-three miles.

16. To sail past Ephesus] The verb is peculiar to this verse. Some understand this as indicating that St. Paul and his party had chartered a private vessel for their journey, and so had control over its ports of call. Ramsay thinks, however, that they probably had the choice of two ships at Troas, the one travelling by Ephesus and the other by Miletus, and that they chose the latter as, for some reason, promising on the whole the quickest passage.

To spend time] Also a verb peculiar to this verse. He could scarcely have revisited Ephesus without taying there to attend to matters relating to the Gospel in Asia.

Was hastening] The occurrences of this verb afford an interesting study (Luke ii. 16; xix. 5-6; ch. xxii. 18; 2 Pet. iii. 12). It is almost exclusively Lukan in usage.

The day of Pentecost] See ii. 1, note.

17. Sent to Ephesus] For Ephesus, see xviii. 19, note. In those days, a foot passenger would have to take a circuitous route of about seventy miles. The quickest route for a messenger would be by boat across the Gulf (twelve and half miles), and then by road (twenty-five miles). Supposing that St. Paul's ship reached Miletus before noon, it would be possible for his messenger to arrive at Ephesus during the night of the same day, and for the presbyters to reach Miletus the next day but one.

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the

Called to him] See vii. 14, for the same verb.

The elders] Or 'presbyters'. See xi. 30; xiv. 23, notes. As at Jerusalem, there were evidently a considerable number of presbyters in Ephesus and its vicinity.

18-38. ST. PAUL'S SPEECH TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

18. Ye yourselves] Emphatic, 'You at least know, as leaders of the Christian community and eye-witnesses of my work'. The Bezan text makes the address begin with the word 'Brethren'.

Set foot in] Cf. xxi. 4; xxv. 1. The verb is also used of going on board a ship (xxi. 2, 6; xxvii. 2). Outside the Acts, it is only found in an Old Testament quotation in Matt. xxi. 5. After Asia, the Bezan text adds 'for these three years or more', but this sounds like a later insertion from v. 31.

19. Serving the Lord] More literally, 'doing bond-service to the Lord (Jesus)'. The phrase is distinctly Pauline (cf. Rom. xii. 11; xiv. 18; xvi. 18; Eph. vi. 7; Col. iii. 24). He uses the verb 'to do bond-service' seventeen times in his Epistles. From the moment of his surrender to Christ, he was heart and soul the 'slave' of the heavenly Master.

Lowliness of mind] Also, mainly, a Pauline word (Eph. iv. 2; Col. ii. 18, 23; iii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 5). It represents a moral quality, humility, which, to the pagan Greeks, would suggest mean servility, but which the Gospel has claimed and transfigured into one of the chiefest virtues.

Tears] We find the apostle shedding tears over—

- (a) The unconverted world (Acts xx. 19, 31).
- (b) Inconsistent Christians (2 Cor. ii. 4).
- (c) Unsanctified ministers (Phil. iii. 18).

20 plots of the Jews : how that I shrank not from declaring
 unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you
 21 publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to
 Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith

He was one of the bravest of men, but his heart was wrung with pity for those who lived in sin. This should be the true Christian's attitude in India towards those in spiritual darkness.

Plots] See ix. 24; xx. 3; xxiii. 30. We know no details of the plots in question. As in Galatia, Thessalonica, and Corinth, so in Ephesus, the Jews are seen to have constantly opposed and plotted against the apostle. St. Luke, in his history, maintains a remarkable reticence about the details of St. Paul's sufferings. He is not writing to glorify a martyr but to narrate the progress of the Gospel. For the attitude of the Ephesian Jews, see xix. 9, 33-4; and cf. 1 Cor. xv. 30-1 (words written from Ephesus)

20. Shrank not from] This verb occurs again in v. 27; Gal. ii. 12; Heb. x. 38. It means 'to draw back from policy or timidity'. It is often used of military operations. St. Paul was no craven soldier, 'shrinking back from his post of duty or hiding his colours for fear of the enemy.'

Publicly] See xvi. 37, note. That is, in the Jewish synagogue, the lecture hall of Tyrannus, etc.

From house to house] Cf. ii. 46. It speaks of the work of instruction carried on in private houses, like that of Aquila and Prisca (1 Cor. xvi. 19), and other Christians; but may also include house-to-house visitation and dealings of a more personal and individual character (v. 31). Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 11.

21. Testifying] See ii. 40, note. It is a Paulo-Lukan word, save for Heb. ii. 6.

Repentance] See ii. 38, note. The original gives the sense of 'turning the mind from sin to God' (cf. 1 Thess. i. 9). It has also the definite article, conveying the force of 'repentance'

toward our Lord Jesus ¹Christ. And now, behold, **22**
 I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem,
 not knowing the things that shall befall me <sup>1 Many an-
 cient au-
 thorities
 omit Christ.</sup>
 there: save that the Holy Ghost testifieth **23**
 unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions

on their part'. The teaching of Eph. ii. 1-10; iv. 17-24 will illustrate this doctrine.

Faith toward our Lord Jesus] Faith, that is, which goes out actively towards Him and embraces His merits. See ii. 38, note. Cf. Eph. i. 13-19; ii. 8; iii. 12, 17; iv. 5, 13; vi. 16, 23, for the strong emphasis laid on faith.

These two doctrines, repentance and faith, are the great requirements of the Gospel. We *must* forsake sin; we *must* also lay hold of Christ our righteousness.

22. Bound in the spirit] That is 'bound in my spirit', so as to be unable to act otherwise. Some understand it to mean 'bound as a prisoner in spirit, though not yet in body with chains'. It may, however, be taken to mean 'constrained by the Holy Spirit' (cf. v. 23). The divine Spirit acts on the human spirit, and so the two main interpretations are not far removed from each other. Cf. Rom. xv. 30-1.

Befall] Or 'meet'. See x. 25, for the same verb. He only had a dim vision of sufferings ahead, and could not see clearly how it would all work out.

23. Testifieth] See v. 21; ii. 40, note.

In every city] A Paulo-Lukan phrase (Luke viii. 1, 4; Acts xv. 36; Titus i. 5). What happened later at Tyre (xxi. 4) and Caesarea (xxi. 11-14) had clearly occurred previously in Philippi, Troas, etc.

Bonds] This noun, in its neuter plural form as here, is peculiarly Lukan (Luke viii. 29; Acts xvi. 26). St. Paul uses the masculine. We find 'bonds' and 'affliction' in juxtaposition again in Phil. i. 17. It was not a cheerful prospect, but the apostle had learned to rejoice even in bonds (xvi. 25).

- 24 abide me. But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, ¹so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify
- ¹ Or, in comparison of accomplishing my course
- 25 the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more.

24. I hold not my life of any account, etc.] So the oldest manuscripts. But the Bezan text and some other authorities read 'I make account of nothing (of this), neither hold I my life dear etc.' (cf. xv. 26; Phil. ii. 30; Rev. xii. 11). The word 'dear' means 'precious', 'valuable'. Life was only valuable to this true missionary in so far as it brought glory to his Master and salvation to his fellow-men (Phil. i. 21-4).

So that I may accomplish my course] The Greek construction is unusual, and hence the alternative suggestion of the margin. For 'course' see xiii. 25, note. The metaphor of the athlete or runner in the Grecian games was a favourite one with St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 24-7; Phil. iii. 13, 14; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

Ministry] See vi. 4, note. Here it denotes his official work as a minister of Christ (cf. i. 17-25).

Received from the Lord Jesus] Cf. ix. 15; xxvi. 16-18, and his own emphatic statements in Gal. i. 1, 11-12, 15-17.

To testify] See vv. 21, 23; and ii. 40, note.

The gospel of the grace of God] To St. Paul, his message was 'the good news of God's grace (to all men).' For 'grace', see xiii. 43, note; and mark how it is emphasized in the Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 2, 6, 7; ii. 5, 7, 8; iii. 2, 7, 8; iv. 7, 29; vi. 24), particularly under the special aspect of God's 'surprising mercy' in the admission of the Gentiles.

25. I know] This need not be pressed to mean more than that it was his strong conviction at the time.

Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am **26** pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not **27** from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God.

Went about] This may possibly mean that, during his Ephesian ministry, he itinerated in the neighbourhood (viii. 4, note), as well as moved about freely in the city. But see v. 20.

Preaching the kingdom] 'Heralding' (viii. 5, note) that kingdom. The verb is frequent in the Pauline Epistles (e.g. Rom. x. 8, 14-15; 1 Cor. i.:23; xv. 11-12; 2 Cor. i. 19; iv. 5). He calls himself a 'herald' (1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11). For 'kingdom' see viii. 12, note. The thought of God's kingdom seems to have been much in his mind while in Ephesus (1 Cor. iv. 20; vi. 9-10; xv. 24, 50).

Shall see my face no more] We gather, from after events, that his forebodings were not actually verified (1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 20). God led His servant in unexpected paths and gave him unanticipated pleasures.

26. I testify] Notice the stress laid on 'testifying' all through this address (vv. 21, 23-4). The particular form of the verb used here, however, means more than testimony and is almost equivalent to saying 'I protest unto you'. It is Paul-Lukan in usage (xxvi. 22; Gal. v. 3; Eph. iv. 17; 1 Thess. ii. 12).

I am pure, etc.] See xviii. 6, note. He had worked conscientiously among them, and done all he could to promote their salvation.

27. Shrank not from] See v. 20, note.

The whole counsel of God] For 'counsel', see ii. 23, note; and cf. Eph. i. 11. The phrase means the entire plan and purpose of God for man's salvation in all its fulness. The Epistle to the Ephesians is a rich and clear exposition of this divine counsel, comprehending the election, redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification, and holy living of believers, both in their individual and corporate capacity.

28 ¹ Or, *overseers*
² Many ancient authorities read *the Lord*.
³ Gr. *acquired*.

Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you ¹ bishops, to feed the church of ² God, which he ³ purchased with his own

28. Take heed unto yourselves] See Luke xvii. 3; xxi. 34; ch. v. 35; and cf. the similar charge to Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 16). The Christian minister must first attend to his own character and conduct, and then to those of his flock. The shepherd must walk in the path of holiness if he would lead his sheep therein. This fact needs strong emphasis in India, where, in non-Christian religions, there has so often been a divorce between doctrine and practice.

To all the flock] This word for 'flock' occurs again in v. 29; Luke xii. 32; 1 Pet. v. 2-3, and a cognate one in Matt. xxvi. 31; Luke ii. 8; John x. 16; 1 Cor. ix. 7. It is in respect of this metaphor of the congregation as a 'flock' that ministers are called 'shepherds' or 'pastors' (Eph. iv. 11). Our Lord's teaching in John x. 1-18 will occur to our minds.

The Holy Ghost] See Introd. VI. 1; and cf. xiii. 2, 4.

You] The second personal pronoun is emphatic all through this address (vv. 18, 20, 25, 26, 30, 32). It was personal speaking.

Bishops] Margin, 'overseers', the title which, as time went on, became confined to the office which corresponds with the modern episcopate (xi. 30, note). Throughout the New Testament, however, the terms 'presbyter', 'bishop', as here (vv. 17, 28), denote two aspects of the same office, the former pointing to the minister's weight of years and standing (elder), and the latter to his work of supervision (overseer).

To feed] Or, 'to shepherd'. Cf. John xxi. 16; 1 Cor. ix. 7; 1 Pet. v. 2.

The church of God] For 'church', see ch. v. 11, note. The phrase 'the church of God' occurs again in 1 Cor. i. 2; x. 32; xi. 16, 22; xv. 9; 2 Cor. i. 1; Gal. i. 13; 1 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Thess. i. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 5, 15. Its frequency in the Epistle written from

blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves 29 shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and 30 from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Ephesus (1 Cor.) is remarkable. As the margin shews, many ancient authorities read 'the church of the Lord', though the two oldest MSS. support the reading of the text, which, if retained, is a strong proof of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. An objection is felt by many to the phrase 'God. . . purchased with His own blood'; but our Saviour was very God as well as man, as many passages of Scripture clearly shew, and so the expression, however strange, is theologically true.

Purchased] Margin, 'acquired'. The verb means 'to acquire for one's own possession'. It is Paulo-Lukan (Luke xvii. 33; 1 Tim. iii. 13). The cognate noun occurs in Eph. i. 14; 1 Thess. v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 14; Heb. x. 39; 1 Pet. ii. 9.

With His own blood] As the price of purchase and redemption. Cf. 1 Pet. i. 18-19 and Eph. i. 7; ii. 13. The blood of Jewish sacrifices, as also that of védic yajnas, yágas, and médhas, all pointed to the need of redemption by the blood-shedding of a divine Saviour.

29. Departing] A word peculiar to this verse. In classical Greek, it generally denotes 'arrival', but is occasionally used as here. • He means his departure from their midst for other work.

Grievous wolves] See Matt. vii. 15; x. 16; Luke x. 3; John x. 12, the first and last of which passages are in point here. False teachers are intended, and, in particular, such Judaizing emissaries as had wrought such evil in the Galatian churches (Gal. iii. 1-4; iv. 8-11).

Not sparing the flock] Both 'fleeing' them of their possessions (2 Pet. ii. 14-15) and perverting their faith (2 Tim. ii. 18).

30. From among your own selves] Men like Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 17), Phygelus and Hermogenes (2 Tim. i. 15), Philetus (2 Tim. ii. 17), and others (1 Tim. i. 3-7; vi. 9-10; 2 Tim. iii. 1-9). Cf. also 1 John ii. 18-22; iv. 1-3.

- 31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. And now I commend you to ¹ God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up, and to give *you* the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.
- 32 ¹ Some ancient authorities read *the Lord*

Perverse things] See xiii. 8, 10. Things, that is, not in accordance with God's will and word.

To draw away] Or 'to drag away'. See xxi. 1, note.

31. Watch ye] A verb implying sleepless alertness, like that of shepherds watching their flocks by night. St. Paul uses it in 1 Cor. xvi. 18; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 6, 10.

By the space of three years] According to Jewish reckoning, that is. It was really only about two and a quarter years (xix. 10, note).

Admonish] A Pauline verb (Rom. xv. 14; 1 Cor. iv. 14; Col. i. 28; iii. 16; 1 Thess. v. 12, 14; 2 Thess. iii. 15). It includes both advice and warning.

Every one] We note the apostle's individual dealing. Cf. Col. i. 28; 1 Thess. ii. 11. Every sheep of the flock received the attention of this faithful shepherd.

Night and day] See xix. 9, note. For other occurrences of the phrase, see Mark iv. 27; v. 5; Luke ii. 37; Acts xxvi. 7; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8; 1 Tim. v. 5; 2 Tim. i. 3.

With tears] See v. 19, note.

32. I commend] See xiv. 23.

To God] Some ancient authorities have 'to the Lord' (margin), meaning the Lord Jesus. This may, however, have arisen from the corresponding passage in xiv. 23.

The word of His grace] Cf. xiv. 3. We mark the stress on 'grace' (v. 24, note), both in this address and in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye ³³
 yourselves know that these hands ministered unto ³⁴
 my necessities, and to them that were with me. In ³⁵
 all things I gave you an example, how that so la-
 bouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember

To build (you) up] See ix. 31, note. The metaphor of a building may have been suggested by the great temple at Ephesus. Cf. also Eph. ii. 20-2; iv. 12. Mark the need and profitableness of studying God's holy word.

The inheritance] A word occurring three times in the Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 14, 18; v. 5). It relates both to the Christian's present inheritance of grace here (xxvi. 18; Col. i. 12) and to his future inheritance of glory (Rom. viii. 17; Heb. ix. 15; 1 Pet. i. 4).

Them that are sanctified] See xxvi. 18; and cf. Eph. v. 26; Col. i. 12. Sanctification is a progressive process entered upon at conversion, and to be fully consummated in a glorified state. It is accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the believer, as He imparts continually the holiness of Christ; and the means whereby we receive that holiness is faith (xxvi. 18).

33. I coveted, etc.] It is most important that Christian workers should be above all suspicion of self-interest. Cf. 1 Sam. xii. 1-6; chapter iii. 6; 1 Thess. ii. 5-6; 1 Tim. iii. 3, 8; vi. 10.

34. These hands] He probably shewed his hands as he spoke; they were hardened by toil. Cf. his manual gestures in xiii. 16; xxi. 40; xxvi. 1, 29.

Ministered] See xiii. 36; xxiv. 23. This verse shews that the apostle not only supported himself, but also helped some of his companions. Cf. xix. 9, note, and his teaching in Eph. iv. 28. He certainly led a strenuous life, and is a striking example of hard and honest labour. He was no dreamy philosopher, but an active and energetic philanthropist.

35. In all things I gave you an example] We might render 'I have exemplified all things (by my own conduct)'. The noun cognate with this verb is used in John xiii. 15, an interesting

the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and
37 prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and

parallel. 'Example is better than precept.' Like his Master, this great teacher illustrated his doctrine by his own life. It is gurus of this kind which India needs, and will respect (cf. i. 1, note). The fact that St. Paul could appeal to those who had watched his life closely for over two years shews how consistent his actions had been. Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 10; Phil. iv. 9.

So] That is, 'as ye saw me do'.

Labouring] The word speaks of 'fatiguing toil'. St. Paul frequently employs it in his Epistles.

To help] A Paulo-Lukan verb, meaning literally 'to lay hold opposite (so as to assist)'. Its occurrences are interesting (Luke i. 54; 1 Tim. vi. 2).

The weak] This may denote either those destitute of *physical* strength (the sick and poor and needy), or those devoid of *spiritual* strength. Cf. 1 Thess. v. 14; Rom. xiv. 1. The other occurrences of the word in the Acts indicate bodily sickness (ix. 37; xix. 12), and perhaps the context favours this meaning here also. Christianity is essentially a philanthropic religion.

It is more blessed, etc.] The only saying of our Lord, definitely known as such, recorded in the New Testament outside the four Gospels. His own life perfectly exemplified it. (2 Cor. viii. 9; Eph. v. 2; Phil. ii. 5-8). }

36. Kneeled down] See vii. 60, note; xxi. 5-6.

37. They all wept sore] Literally 'there was abundant weeping (on the part) of all'. The noun denotes loud weeping and wailing. The whole scene is eastern in its open and unrepressed emotion.

Kissed him] Imperfect tense, 'They kissed him tenderly again and again'. Cf. the use of the same verb in Luke vii. 38, 45; xv. 20.

fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most 38 of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

38. Sorrowing] A Lukan verb (Luke ii. 48; xvi. 24-5). It denotes great anguish of mind.

Behold] The verb denotes more than merely 'seeing' (v. 25), and speaks of attentive gazing (iii. 16; iv. 13; vii. 56; x. 11). The thought that they might never again gaze on that well known and beloved face overpowered them with grief. How often they had beheld it radiant with the glow of enthusiastic love and earnestness.

Brought him on his way] See xv. 3, note. The harbour was some distance from the town.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XX

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) A sojourn in Macedonia and Greece. vv. 1-5.
- (2) A Sunday in Troas. vv. 6-12.
- (3) A synod in Miletus. vv. 13-38.

II. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) Multiform missionary labours.
 - (a) St. Paul visiting the churches. vv. 1-3. An itinerating tour.
 - (b) St. Paul escorting delegates (with funds). vv. 4-6. Philanthropic.
 - (c) St. Paul conducting Sunday services. vv. 7-12.
 - (d) St. Paul charging the clergy. vv. 18-35.
 - (e) St. Paul praying with fellow-workers. vv. 36-8.
- (2) A Lord's Day Service. vv. 7-12.
 - (a) The day. The first day of the week. v. 7.
 - (b) The assembly. Gathered together. v. 7.
 - (c) The sermon. Discoursed. vv. 7-9.
 - (d) The commemorative rite. Break bread. vv. 7-11.
- (3) A clerical charge. vv. 18-35.
 - (a) The minister's personal holiness. vv. 18, 19, 28, 33, 35. (Consistency, consecration, humility, patience,

1 And when it came to pass that we were parted from them, and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from

freedom from covetousness, an exemplification of his own doctrine).

- (b) The minister's conscientious courage. vv. 20, 27.
- (c) The minister's incessant labours. vv. 20, 28, 31, 34-5.
- (d) The minister's important duties.
 - Testifying repentance and faith. v. 21.
 - Testifying the Gospel of the grace of God. v. 24.
 - Heralding the kingdom. v. 25.
 - Declaring the whole counsel of God. v. 27.
 - Shepherding the flock of God. v. 28.
 - Helping the weak and needy. vv. 34-5.
- (e) The minister's entire devotion. vv. 22-3.
- (f) The minister's watchful care. vv. 28-31.
- (g) The minister's spiritual strength. v. 32. (In God and the word of His grace.)

CHAPTER XXI

1-17. JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. TYRE AND CAESAREA

1. Were parted from them] The verb really means 'were torn away from them', and shews what a wrench it cost them to separate from one another. The presbyters clung to their beloved teacher in tender affection. The same word is used of our Lord 'tearing Himself away from' His disciples in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 41). Its other occurrences (xx. 30; Matt. xxvi. 51) are in a different connexion.

Set sail] See xiii. 13, note.

Came with a straight course] See xvi. 11, note. The wind was favourable, and they had a straight run.

Cos] A fertile island off the coast of Caria, forty nautical miles distant to the south of Miletus, at the south-west corner of Asia Minor. It was important as a commercial centre, lying, as it did, on a trade route; as also for its famous temple of Aesculapius (the Greek god of medicine) and for its medical school. It was incorporated in the Roman province of Asia.

thence unto Patara : and having found a ship crossing² over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard, and set sail.

There was constant communication between Cos and Alexandria. St. Paul's vessel apparently anchored there for the night, at the town of Cos on the eastern side of the island of the same name.

Rhodes] 'The isle of roses', as its name implies. It lies off the coast of Caria, south-east of Cos. It is forty-three miles long, with a maximum breadth of twenty miles—and is twelve miles from the mainland at its nearest point. In the pre-Roman period, it was politically paramount in that part of Asia Minor, the greater portions of Caria and Lycia being subject to it. Under the Romans, however, it lost most of its greatness, though its geographical position still rendered it commercially important. Its great city, of the same name, was at the extreme north-east corner of the island. Rhodes became famous again in the fourteenth century A. D. through its Christian warriors 'the knights of Rhodes', who successfully opposed the Turks for many years, till they transferred themselves to Crete, Sicily, and finally to Malta. St. Paul's ship spent the night in the roadstead of the town of Rhodes.

Patara] A city on the coast of Lycia, almost due east of Rhodes. It was near the mouth of the river Xanthos, and was the harbour for the towns lying inland in the valley of the Xanthos, besides forming an important station for coasting steamers. It was a highly prosperous city. St. Paul's ship would have a straight run, at that time of the year, across from Rhodes to Patara. There they trans-shipped (v. 2).

The Bezan text adds 'and Myra' (see xxvii. 5, note), and the new ship in which they embarked at Patara would be almost sure to call at Myra, as it was the great port for cross-sea traffic to Syria.

2. Crossing over] That is, 'crossing over the open (Mediterranean) sea'. The prevailing wind in the Levant throughout the summer months is from the west, so that sailing vessels could run direct from Lycia to the Syrian coast. Those travelling in the opposite direction, however, i. e. from Syria

3 And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4 And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that

to Lycia, had to hug the coast of Asia Minor past the east end of Cyprus, as the wind was contrary, and they could not make the cross-sea passage (see xxvii. 2-5). †

Phoenicia] See xi. 19, note. The run was about 400 miles.

Went aboard] See xx. 18, note (set foot in).

Set sail] See xiii. 13, note.

3. **Had come in sight of]** A Lukan word (Luke xix. 11). More simply 'when we had sighted'.

Cyprus] See iv. 36, note. It would be the western corner of the island which they saw, as they ran to the south of it.

Leaving it on the left hand] As they travelled in a south-easterly direction, the island would be on their left.

We sailed] Imperfect tense, 'we kept on our sailing course'. The verb is used again in xxvii. 2, 6, 24.

Syria] See xv. 23.

Landed] See xviii. 22, note.

Tyre] See xii. 20, note.

To unlade her burden] A nautical phrase, 'was (detained) discharging her cargo'. The verb is peculiar to this verse, and the noun (cargo) occurs again only in Rev. xviii. 11, 12. The ship must have been a fairly large merchant vessel as she required so long to discharge her cargo.

4. **Having found]** A Lukan verb (Luke ii. 16). It implies some degree of search, 'having found out the disciples'.

The disciples] The definite article suggests that they knew of the presence of disciples in the town. We see in this the fruit of former labours (xi. 19; xv. 3; cf. Gal. i. 21).

he should not set foot in Jerusalem. And when it 5 came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way, till we were out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach,

Seven days] This enforced delay would give the apostle a Sabbath with the local Christians. He had, clearly, time to spare before the Feast of Pentecost.

Said] And that repeatedly (imperfect tense). Cf. xx. 23.

Through the Spirit] Cf. i. 2, note. He spoke through them as His instruments.

That he should not set foot] For the verb, see xx. 18, note. They warned him that going to Jerusalem meant 'bonds and afflictions'. It is not to be regarded as a prohibition against going, but as a solemn warning of what lay before him. The apostle had been similarly warned from place to place, but was 'constrained by the Spirit' to go and face the storm (xx. 22-4).

5. Had accomplished the days] The verb only occurs again in 2 Tim. iii. 17, and that in its usual sense of 'furnish' (equip). It means here 'when we had completed the seven days allotted for the ship's stay'.

With wives and children] A graphic and human touch, worthy of St. Luke.

Brought us on our way] See xv. 3, note; and cf. xx. 38.

Till we were out of the city] That is, 'till we reached the harbour, beyond the city walls'.

Kneeling down] See vii. 60, note; and cf. xx. 36.

The beach] Cf. xxvii. 39, 40. It denotes a smooth beach, not a rocky one.

Prayed] See xx. 36; and Introd. VI. 10.

6 we prayed, and bade each other farewell; and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the

6. Went on board] Cf. v. 2. The verb here is only slightly different.

The ship] The definite article implies that it was the same vessel as they had travelled to Tyre in. Its destination was Ptolemais.

7. When we had finished] A verb peculiar to this verse, 'to complete entirely'. Ptolemais, that is, was the final destination of the vessel.

The voyage] A word found again only in xxvii. 9-10. It is usually taken to mean here the short voyage from Tyre to Ptolemais; but some understand it of the entire voyage from Macedonia.

Arrived at] See xvi. 1, note.

Ptolemais] Called 'Acco' in Old Testament times (Judges i. 31), having been formerly a Philistine town. It is now well known as 'Acre'. It is at the northern extremity of the Bay of Acre, which bends round to Mt. Carmel in the south. Its name was derived from Ptolemy I Philadelphus, when it passed into his possession. Under the Romans, it received special colonial privileges. It shared with Tyre, Sidon, Antioch, and Cæsarea the trade of that coast. It is about thirty miles south of Tyre.

The brethren] The foundation of the church there may have been due to Philip the evangelist, or to other itinerant preachers (viii. 4; xi. 19).

8. Unto Cæsarea] They proceeded thither by land, the distance being from thirty to forty miles, to the south. For 'Cæsarea', see viii. 40, note.

seven, we abode with him. Now this man had four ⁹ daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as ¹⁰ we tarried there ¹ many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named ^{1 Or, some} Agabus. And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, ¹¹ he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver

Phillip the evangelist] See vi. 5; viii. 5, 40. Apparently, he had made Caesarea his head-quarters since the events narrated in ch. viii. The title evangelist is peculiar to him in the Acts, but we find it again in Eph. iv. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 5.

9. Four daughters, virgins] It is characteristic of St. Luke to call attention to those of the other sex. The notice that they were 'virgins' does not necessarily imply more than that they were still unmarried (1 Cor. vii. 25, 28, 34-8); though they may, of course, have voluntarily remained so with a view to special Christian usefulness.

Which did prophesy] In accordance with ii. 17-18. For the meaning of 'prophesy', see ii. 4, 17; xi. 27, notes. We have here a specific instance of the utterance of inspired messages for purposes of exhortation and edification.

10. Many days] Literally 'more days', as in xiii. 31; xxv. 14; xxvii. 20. The phrase is peculiar to the Acts. Ramsay thinks that St. Paul reached Caesarea in A. D. (37) on May 14, Pentecost falling that year on May 28. In any case, he had a week or more to spare.

Came down] See xviii. 22, note. He may have come on purpose to see and warn the apostle.

A certain prophet, named Agabus] See xi. 27-8, notes.

11. Bound his own feet and hands] A sign after the manner of the old Hebrew prophets (see Jer. xiii. 1-8; Ezk. v. 1-3).

Thus saith the Holy Ghost] See xx. 23 and v. 4. The words make it clear that a warning, not a prohibition, is intended.

12 him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place
 13 besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.
 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

They are a definite prediction of Paul's imprisonment under the Roman authority.

12. Both we] That is, St. Luke and the delegates (xx. 4).

They of that place] One word in the Greek, an adjective found only here. It denotes Philip, his daughters, and the other Christians of Caesarea.

Besought] Again and again (imperfect tense).

Go up] See xviii. 22, note.

13. Breaking] A verb peculiar to this verse. It means literally 'to break to pieces', and, metaphorically, 'to weaken or enervate (the spirit)'. The tears and entreaties of fellow-Christians were hard to resist, but the apostle was under the influence of a higher power.

I am ready] The exact phrase is found again in 2 Cor. xii. 14.

For the name of, etc.] See xv. 26. It is sincere devotion to a personal Saviour which nerves the true Christian to do and dare for His sake.

14. Ceased] Literally 'they held their peace', 'were silent' (see xi. 18).

The will of the Lord be done] Cf. Eph. v. 17; and see Luke xxii. 42. Refer also to xviii. 21, note. We see that all recognized finally that it was the Lord's will that St. Paul should go to Jerusalem, and that, therefore, the prophetic intimations were not prohibitions.

And after these days we ¹ took up our baggage, and **15**
 went up to Jerusalem. And there went
 with us also *certain* of the disciples from ^{1 Or, made} **16**
ready
 Caesarea, bringing *with them* one Mnason of Cyprus,
 an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

15. Took up our baggage] Margin, 'made ready our baggage'. This represents only one word in the Greek, a verb which may mean, as these readings suggest, a packing up of their belongings (including the Gentile contributions) ready for a start. Ramsay, however, suggests the translation 'equipped (horses)', since the verb is employed in the classics of equipping or saddling a horse. The distance to Jerusalem was about sixty-five miles, and it is not likely that, under the circumstances, the party walked thither on foot, especially as it must have been almost the eve of Pentecost. The Bezan text (see next verse) implies that it only took two days to cover the distance.

Went up] See xviii. 22, note. The tense is imperfect, 'started to go up'.

16. Bringing (with them) one Mnason] Render, rather, 'conducting us to (the house of) one Mnason', a fair rendering of the Greek, and one fitting in better with the circumstances. As it was sixty-five miles to Jerusalem, they would have to spend a night *en route* somewhere, in order to refresh themselves and their horses. So some of the Caesarean Christians conducted them to a sort of half-way house where Mnason, a Christian, lived; and afterwards returned to Caesarea, leaving the party to pursue alone the rest of the journey to Jerusalem. This is confirmed by the Bezan text which reads, 'And these conducted us to those with whom we should lodge; and reaching a certain village, we were in the house of Mnason, an early disciple; and, going out thence, we came to Jerusalem'.

Mnason] Probably a Hellenistic Jew, as his name was a common Greek one. Like Barnabas, he was a Cypriot (iv. 36, note).

An early disciple] Meaning that he had long been a Christian, possibly from the day of Pentecost, if not even before.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren
 18 received us gladly. And the day following Paul went
 in with us unto James ; and all the elders were present.
 19 And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by

17. The brethren received us] This must denote a private and unofficial reception by those Christians whom they first came into contact with on arrival. The official reception followed later (v. 18).

Gladly] A word peculiar to this verse. It must have given cheer to the party to be so cordially received, since they anticipated trouble. ;

4. Concluding Events. xxi. 18—xxviii. 31.

We have now arrived at the point when St. Paul's career as a free evangelist is closed, so far as the Acts of the Apostles is concerned. In the provinces of Syria, Cyprus, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia, he has planted the banner of the Gospel and founded churches. Henceforth, we see him, in this history, as a prisoner, still preaching the truth as occasion offers, but 'an ambassador in a chain'.

A. EVENTS IN JERUSALEM. xxi. 18—xxiii. 35.

18-40. ST. PAUL'S ARREST

18. With us] St. Luke and the delegates, who most likely presented then the offerings of the Gentile churches to their brethren in Jerusalem, as a token of brotherly love and Christian sympathy. The first person plural is not resumed, after this incident, till xxvii. 1; but it is most natural to suppose that St. Luke continued within easy reach during the interval.

Unto James] See xii. 17; xv. 13, notes. He is seen here as the chief authority in the church of Jerusalem, the virtual bishop, as we now understand that term.

All the elders] See xi. 30; xv. 2. With James, they constituted the authoritative leaders of the church there.

19. Rehearsed] See x. 8; xv. 12, 14.

one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And they when they 20 heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many ¹ thousands there are among the Jews of them which ^{1Gr. myriads} have believed; and they are all zealous for the law:

Which God had wrought] See xiv. 27; xv. 12.

Among the Gentiles] It was just this which the circumcision party were constantly criticizing and opposing (see *Introd.* V. 3).

Ministry] See vi. 1; xx. 24, notes.

20. Glorified God] And that repeatedly (imperfect tense). Cf. xi. 18.

Seest] A verb implying close observation (see xx. 38, behold; and references there). St. Paul may already have had a special opportunity of seeing a large number of Jewish Christians since his arrival in the city, and have marked their attitude.

Brother] We note the word of affection. They extended to him a truly fraternal greeting. Cf. ix. 17.

Thousands] Margin, 'myriads'. The word is found again in Luke xii. 1; Acts xix. 19; Heb. xii. 22; Jude 14; Rev. v. 11; ix. 16. Though denoting, literally, 'ten thousand', it is sometimes used of a large and indefinite number. The believing Jews referred to may represent not only Jerusalem Christians, but others also gathered from all Judaea and elsewhere for the Feast. The Bezan text says 'them which have believed in Judaea'. In any case, we see what great progress the Gospel had made among the Jews.

Zealous for the law] Literally, 'zealots of the law'. The noun 'zealots' is used again in xxii. 3; 1 Cor. xiv. 12; Gal. i. 14; Titus ii. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 13; and it occurs as a name or title in Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13. They were, that is, zealous observers and maintainers of the law of Moses, while yet they accepted Jesus as the Messiah. They occupied an anomalous position which could not last, for Christianity could never continue to run in such restricted channels.

21 and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the
 22 customs. What is it therefore? they will certainly
 23 hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on

21. Have been informed] See xviii. 25, where the same verb occurs. It implies oral communication and instruction. The circumcision party had been growing in numbers, influence, and bigotry since the council of Jerusalem, and had assiduously maligned and opposed St. Paul not only in Jerusalem but also in Galatia, Achaia, and elsewhere. They seem to have had their appointed emissaries and instructors.

All the Jews, etc.] This, of course, was not the case. The apostle had only claimed full liberty for Gentile Christians.

To forsake Moses] Literally, 'apostasy from Moses'. The noun 'apostasy' is Paulö-Lukan, only occurring again in 2 Thess. ii. 3 (the falling away).

Not to circumcise] His action in the case of Timothy (xvi. 3) was sufficient in itself to rebut such a charge, but party spirit and rumour always misrepresent and pervert facts, wilfully or unconsciously.

The customs] See vi. 14, note. We must beware in India lest we allow national customs or social traditions to usurp the place of law of Christ, and European and American missionaries need also to avoid imposing their own western customs which are not a part of the original Gospel.

22. What is it therefore] Many ancient authorities add 'the multitudes must needs come together'; that is, 'The circumcision party will be sure to convene a meeting of Jewish Christians in opposition'.

23. Four men] Who were poor Jewish Christians.

A vow] A temporary Nazirite vow (xviii. 18, note).

them ; these take, and purify thyself with them, and be 24 at charges for them, that they may shave their heads : and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee ; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law. But as touching the Gentiles which have believed, 25

24. Take] The verb means 'to take along with oneself', in friendly association (cf. xv. 39 ; xvi. 33).

Purify thyself with them] That is, apparently, 'Become a Nazirite, under consecration vows, and observe the laws as to purification' (Num. vi). The suggestion has been made that St. Paul may have been himself already under some vow of thanksgiving (see note xxiv. 17).

Be at charges for them] Literally, 'Spend (money) over them',—the cost of the necessary sacrifices, etc. The same verb occurs in Mark v. 26 ; Luke xv. 14 ; 2 Cor. xii. 15 ; Jas. iv. 3 ; and the passages afford an interesting study of various objects on which expenditure is made. Cf. also Luke xiv. 28, where a cognate word occurs. It was considered meritorious among the Jews to defray the sacrificial expenses of Nazirites who were very poor. King Agrippa I had done so on his first arrival in Jerusalem (Josephus, Antiq. xix. 6. 1). We have instances in India of rich Hindus defraying religious expenses for their poorer neighbours, in connexion with initiation and other ceremonies.

Shave their heads] On the accomplishment of their vow (Num. vi. 18 ; chapter xviii. 18).

Have been informed] See v. 21, note, for the same verb.

Thou thyself also] As well as the criticizers.

Walkest orderly] One word, a verb denoting 'a regular walk in a prescribed line of conduct'. It is Paulo-Lukan (Rom. iv. 12 ; Gal. v. 25 ; vi. 16 ; Phil. iii. 16).

25. We] Emphatic. It refers to St. James and the elders. They, as a body, still stood by the convention arrive at by the council (ch. xv).

we ¹ wrote, giving judgement that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul ² took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them.

¹ Or, *enjoined*
Many ancient authorities read *sent*.

² Or, *took the men the next day, and purifying himself, etc.*

27 And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude, and laid hands on him,

Wrote] See xv. 20, note. Some ancient authorities read 'sent' (see margin), as though 'sent delegates' (xv. 22).

Things sacrificed to idols, etc.] See xv. 20, 29, notes.

26. Then Paul] Acting as then seemed best (1 Cor. ix. 20), though his desire to avoid misunderstanding and friction was not hereby gratified. One of his special objects at this juncture was, it would seem, to conciliate the Judæan churches and to promote Christian unity. He had probably purified himself and offered the usual offerings on his previous visit (xviii. 18, note), so that he was not now violating anything which he regarded as a principle. Time alone effected a complete severance of Christianity from Judaism.

Declaring the fulfilment, etc.] Announcing, that is, to the officiating priests the days when the vows would be accomplished and the sacrifices offered. The words 'fulfilment' and 'purification' are peculiar to this verse.

The offering] Prescribed by the law of Moses (Num. vi. 14-15). We do not know whether or no the same day formed the termination of the vows of all those concerned: but, at any rate, 'seven days' was the entire period remaining (v. 27). ¶

27. The seven days] We lack data for explaining this specific number. The 'seven days' were, somehow, connected with the final termination of the vows. Various conjectures have been

crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, 28 that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy

made, but none of them are really satisfactory. What is of practical importance is that St. Paul's object was on the eve of attainment when a sudden interruption occurred.

The Jews from Asia] Who were specially inimical because of the triumphs of the Gospel in that province and the enmity aroused against them among the populace of Ephesus (xix. 10, 23; xx. 19). They had come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.

Stirred up] Or 'confused'. See ii. 6; ix. 22; xix. 32, for the same verb.

Laid hands on him] See iv. 3; v. 18; xii. 1.

Men of Israel] The title which would most strongly appeal to their national and religious pride (ii. 22; iii. 12; v. 35; xiii. 16).

Help] The same verb as in xvi. 9. *There*, it was an appeal to bring the Gospel; *here*, it is an appeal to oppose the Gospel.

28. All men everywhere] The adverb (everywhere) occurs only here. It was Paul's catholicity which was the real ground of offence.

Against the people] That is, the Jewish people (x. 2, note).

This place] That is, 'this temple'. The apostle had once joined in a similar charge against Stephen (vi. 13).

Greeks] See xiv. 1, note. Men of an alien race. To their Jewish eyes, it was as grievous as it would be to Brahmans if they saw M'lêchas (foreigners and outcastes), introduced into the inner shrine of the Golden Temple of Benares; or to the Muḥammadans if infidels appeared in the great mosque of Mecca; or to the Buddhists if Christians found access to the inner secrets of the Temple of the Tooth at Kandy.

Hath defiled] The same verb as in x. 15; xi. 9 (make common). We, in India, know how many 'prâyasçittas' (expiatory and

29 place. For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that **30** Paul had brought into the temple. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they

purificatory ceremonies) are performed if a Hindu temple has become defiled by the presence of a foreigner or 'outcaste' person.

29. Trophimus the Ephesian] Whom many of them recognized as their fellow-townsmen. See xx. 4. We may, therefore, well believe that the other delegates of the Gentile churches were in Jerusalem also.

They supposed] The imperfect tense points to a continuance or recurrence of their unfounded supposition. Cf. vii. 25; xvi. 13, for the same verb. Such groundless suspicions are often the cause of serious trouble, and we should be on our guard against entertaining them.

Into the temple] Meaning the inner portion of the temple. The outer 'Court of the Gentiles' was open to all. Beyond that was a raised narrow platform bounded by a lofty wall, through which admittance was obtained by gates to a raised plateau containing the temple proper, with its court of the Women, Court of the Israelites, and Court of the Priests. The actual boundary for Gentiles was a low stone barrier, three cubits in height, which ran round the court at the foot of the steps leading to the narrow platform, and therefore down below the lofty wall. Josephus tells us (Antiq. xv. 11. 6; Wars xv. 5. 2), that it contained pillars at intervals with inscriptions forbidding Gentiles to go beyond. One of these has been recovered and reads, 'No man of another nation to enter within the fence and enclosure around the temple. And whoso is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues'. This was 'the middle wall of partition' referred to in Eph. ii. 14. Seeing the apostle busy with ceremonies in the company of others in the inner court, the Asian Jews supposed that he had taken Trophimus beyond the prescribed barrier.

30. Ran together] Literally, 'There was a running together of the (Jewish) people'. The cognate verb occurs in iii. 11, of

laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the ¹ chief captain of the ² band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions,

31
1 Or, *military tribunal* Gr. *chiliarch*: and so throughout this hook.

32
2 Or, *cohort*

a running together with a very different object. The report that the sacredness of the temple had been violated spread like wild fire and excited the crowds who were congregated in the neighbourhood of the temple for the festival.

Laid hold . . . and dragged] The same two verbs occur in conjunction in xvi. 19.

Out of the temple] That is, out of the walled—in inner courts, into the outer Court of the Gentiles.

The doors were shut] The doors, that is, by which entrance was had, through the lofty wall, into the inner courts. The Levite guards would at once close them. The object in so doing was to preserve the sacred enclosure from further defilement, as they thought, and possibly to prevent the apostle's blood from being shed inside.

31. Tidings came up] The word for 'tidings' is used only here. The verb 'came up' shews an accurate knowledge of the locality. The cloisters or colonnades in the Court of the Gentiles (iii. 11, note) communicated at the north-west corner by a flight of steps with the fortress of Antonia, which was built on a rocky eminence close by and commanded a view of the temple and what went on there. It had originally been built as a fortress palace by Herod the Great, but was now occupied by the Roman garrison. The near presence of this fortress was a constant source of irritation to the Jews. News of the commotion proceeding in the temple was carried up to the fortress, the soldiers of which were kept in readiness under arms at festival seasons to quell disturbances; just as, in India, special police and military precautions have constantly to be taken in large cities during the Muharram and other great Muhammadan and Hindu festivals.

- and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul.
- 33** Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done.
- 34** And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into

The chief captain of the band] Or, 'the chiliarch of the cohort' (margin. See x. 1, note). The military tribune in question was in command of a thousand men, of whom 750 would be infantry and 250 cavalry.

Was in confusion] See ii. 6, for the same verb.

32. Took] 'Took with him', as in v. 26.

Centurions] See x. 1, note. Officers subordinate to him, each commanding a hundred soldiers.

Ran down] Down the steps leading from the fortress of Antonia to the Court of the Gentiles. The compound verb is peculiar to this verse.

Left off beating Paul] The soldiers arrived just in time to prevent his being beaten to death on the spot. The mob was too excited even to drag him out of the city and stone him, as in the case of Stephen. The whole transaction was probably only the affair of a few minutes.

33. With two chains] As a dangerous malefactor whose person must be safely secured. He would be bound by each of these chains to a soldier (xii. 6). Henceforth St. Paul was to be often chain-bound (xxvi. 29; xxviii. 20; Eph. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 16).

Inquired] See iv. 7, for the same verb. The imperfect tense suggests repeated inquiry.

34. Shouted] 'Kept shouting' (imperfect). See xii. 22, for the same verb. Its other occurrences may be compared (Luke xxiii. 21; Acts xxii. 24). The whole scene is vividly depicted.

the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so 35 it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; for the multitude of the people followed 36 after, crying, Away with him.

And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, 37 he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek?

The certainty] Cf. xxii. 30; xxv. 26; and cf. ii. 36. Some were too much excited to give a lucid account; and others were ignorant as to the cause of the tumult.

Uproar] See xx. 1, note.

The castle] The word means either an army or the camp in which an army is quartered (Heb. xi. 34; xiii. 11, 13; Rev. xx. 9. Cf. v. 37; xxii. 24; xxiii. 10, 16, 32). Here it indicates, as throughout this narrative, the soldiers' quarters in the fortress, their barracks.

35. The stairs] The word occurs only here and in v. 40. It denotes the steps leading from the temple cloisters up to the fortress. They were not covered in.

Violence] A noun peculiar to the Acts (ch. v. 26; xxiv. 7, marg.; xxvii. 41). Realizing that St. Paul was escaping their hands, the crowd surged on the soldiers like the violent waves of the sea (xxvii. 41), and tried to sweep him from the grasp of his guards. The soldiers had literally to lift and carry him out of reach.

36. Followed] 'Continued to follow' (imperfect).

Away with him] The very words used in a similar cry of frenzy against his Master (Luke xxiii. 18; John xix. 15).

37. The castle] See v. 34.

Dost thou know Greek] He thought he had in Paul a vulgar impostor or fanatic, and was surprised to be addressed fluently in the language of culture (Introd. IV. 3).

38 Art thou not then the Egyptian, which before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness
39 the four thousand men of the Assassins? But Paul

38. The Egyptian] Josephus tells us (Wars ii. 13. 5) that an Egyptian, posing as a prophet, got together 30,000 men and led them to the Mount of Olives, with intent to overpower the Roman garrison and seize Jerusalem, but that Felix forestalled him by attacking him, when the Egyptian ran away and the greater part of his followers were destroyed or taken prisoners.

In another account of the same event (Antiq. xx. 8. 6), he says that only 400 were slain and 200 taken alive; so that his numbers are clearly unreliable, while the incident itself is authentic.

The event was quite a recent one, so that it was natural for the chief captain to think that the run-away 'Egyptian' had returned to make a fresh attempt at insurrection.

Stirred up to sedition] The same verb as in xvii. 6 (turned upside down).

Four thousand men] He may be referring to the armed nucleus of the Egyptian's followers; or to his first adherents who afterwards increased in numbers; or to the account of the numbers current in Roman official circles. In any case, Josephus's two narratives of the event shew so serious a discrepancy that we can hardly accept his numbers as positively reliable. We know, in the East, how frequently numbers are exaggerated through lack of mental accuracy.

The Assassins] The 'Sicarii' were a set of fanatics who arose in Judea during the procuratorship of Felix (xxiii. 24, note). They were so called because they carried under their garments a short sword or dagger (*sicca*), with which they stabbed their political opponents as they mingled with the crowd at the festivals (Antiq. ii. 13. 3). Felix had to take military measures against them. They afterwards took a prominent part in the Jewish War.

said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. And when he had given him 40 leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying,

39. A Jew] By race. As such, he had a perfect right to enter the inner part of the temple, and was no law-breaker in having done so. He was no alien Egyptian.

Tarsus in Cilicia] See ix. 11, note. A city with a renowned university. This would account, in the chief captain's eyes, for Paul's Greek culture (Introd. V. 1).

A citizen] This refers to the *municipal*, not the *imperial*, franchise (xxii. 25-9). He was an enfranchised citizen of Tarsus as a Greek municipality, as well as a Roman citizen of the empire (xvi. 37-8). See Introd. V. 1.

Of no mean city] In other words, 'of a distinguished city'. Tarsus ranked high among the intellectual cities of the Roman East, and bore upon its coins the proud titles 'metropolis' and 'autonomous' (self-governing). The adjective *mean* or undistinguished occurs only in this verse.

40. Beckoned with the hand] Cf. xii. 17; xiii. 16; xix. 33; and see xx. 34, note. It was now a chained hand (v. 33).

Silence] This noun occurs again only in Rev. viii. 1. The scene is impressive. The vast multitude, agitated a moment before like a raging sea, suddenly sinks into quiet as that chained hand is uplifted and the apostle's calm, but thrilling, words are heard. There must have been something almost majestic in his mien to command attention at such a moment.

He spake unto them] Or, 'he called to them', with some effort of voice to reach so vast a concourse. Except for Matt. xi. 16, the verb is Lukan (Luke vi. 13; vii. 32; xiii. 12; xxiii. 20; chapter xxii. 2).

1 Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you.

In the Hebrew language] That is, Aramaic (i. 19, note). The apostle shewed great tact in speaking in the national tongue.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XXI

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) Friends counselling. vv. 1-26.
 - (a) Warned at Tyre. vv. 1-6.
 - (b) Entreated at Caesarea. vv. 7-14.
 - (c) Advised at Jerusalem. vv. 15-26.
- (2) Foes clamouring. vv. 27-40.
 - (a) In the temple. vv. 27-32.
 - (b) On the stairs. vv. 33-40.

II. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) A noble example.
 - (a) Constant in determination. vv. 4, 11-14.
Unmoved by exhortations, tears, or entreaties, from the clear path of duty.
 - (b) Conciliatory in manner. vv. 20-6.
 - (c) Courageous in danger. vv. 27-40.
Dragged, beaten, chained; yet calm, brave, and ready to testify still.
- (2) God's providential care.
 - (a) Friendship by the way. vv. 4-6, 7, 8-16.
 - (b) Welcome on arrival. vv. 17-20.
 - (c) Protection in danger. vv. 31-6.

CHAPTER XXII

1-22. PAUL'S SPEECH TO THE JEWS

I. **Brethren and fathers]** See vii. 2, note.

The defence] The cognate verb is used in xix. 33 (which see), and this noun occurs again in xxv. 16 in its more strictly legal sense. It is also found in 1 Cor. ix. 3; 2 Cor. vii. 11; Phil. i. 7, 16; 2 Tim. iv. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 15, being chiefly Pauline in usage. It has become current in English with a special meaning 'apology'.

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

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought 3
up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed
according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers,
being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day:

2. **He spake]** See xxi. 40, for the same verb.

The Hebrew language] See xxi 40, and the reference there.

They were the more quiet] More literally, 'They (all) the more maintained silence'. The noun 'silence' or 'quietness' is Paulo-Lukan (2 Thess. iii. 12; 1 Tim. ii. 11-12). Cf. xi. 18; xxi. 14, where the cognate verb is used. The conservative Jews took a patriotic pride in their national language, and the apostle shewed great wisdom in his use of it on this occasion. Attention is often arrested in an Indian audience by the opportune use of Sanskrit phrases or vernacular stanzas, because of the esteem in which they are held by the Hindus.

3. **I]** Emphatic. 'I myself, like you, am a true Jew'.

A Jew] See xxi. 39; and cf. 1 Cor. ix. 20. Thus he claims his national birthright. He was no alien, but as much a Jew, by birth and training, as his hearers.

Tarsus of Cilicia] See ix. 11, note.

Brought up] The verb occurs again only in vii. 20-21 (nourished). It means practically 'educated'. Though born outside the Holy Land, he had been educated in the most approved style at the metropolis.

At the feet of] Of. iv. 35, 37, note. 'At the guru's feet' is a familiar expression to us in India. For Gamaliel, see ch. v. 34, note. Thus St. Paul had been a disciple of one of the most renowned of Jewish Rabbis.

Instructed] See. vii. 22, for the same verb. It implies careful training.

4 and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding
and delivering into prisons both men and women.
5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all

The strict manner] The noun so rendered occurs only here, but a corresponding adjective is found in xxvi. 5, and the adverb is used in xviii. 25-6 (carefully). Cf. also xxiii. 15, 20; xxiv. 22. It denotes careful 'strictness', alike in interpretation and observance. ♪

The law of our fathers] Cf. xxiv. 14; xxviii. :17, for the same adjective (of our fathers). St. Paul refers primarily to the Mosaic law, but probably includes also the traditional interpretation thereof by the scribes, with the numberless rules and observances which were then in vogue (Gal. i. 14); just as an orthodox Musalman includes in his rule of faith and practice not only the Qur'an but also the Sunnat (traditional rules), the Ijmá (collection of opinions of Muḥammad's companions), and the Qiyás (analogical reasoning of the learned with regard to the Qur'an).

Being zealous for God] See xxi. 20, note, for the same word 'zealot'. St. Paul may be said, in a certain sense, to have belonged to the zealots, or extreme section of the Pharisaic party. See Gal. i. 13-14; Phil. iii. 5-6. He had now become Christ's zealot, burning with holy zeal for His cause.

Even as ye all are this day] We notice the speaker's courtesy and conciliatory manner. It was religious zeal, he gladly admits, which was exciting his hearers against him, though the zeal was a mistaken one (Rom. x. 1-2). But 'for God's special grace, he would still be one of them.

4. **This Way]** See ix. 2, note.

Unto the death] He was alluding especially to Stephen (v. 20; vii. 58; viii. 1), but others also seem to be included (xxvi. 10). The protomartyr was not the only one who at that period had laid down his life for Christ.

Both men and women] See viii. 3; ix. 2.

5. **The high priest]** That is, the person who had filled that office at the time referred to. It was probably Caiaphas, and

the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus, to bring them also which were there unto Jerusalem in bonds, for to be punished. And it came to pass, 6 that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto 7 the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, 8 Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they 9

he may have been still alive. The high priest now in office, however, was Ananias (xxiii. 2).

The estate of the elders] That is, 'the (Jewish) presbytery' (Luke xxii. 66), or Sanhedrin (iv. 5, note).

From whom] Plural. That is, 'from the high priest and the Sanhedrin'.

Letters unto the brethren] See ix. 2, notes.

To be punished] A fact implied, though not expressed, in ix. 2. Cf. xxvi. 11, where alone this verb is used again in the New Testament.

6. **About noon]** An addition to the account of ix. 3 (cf. xxvi. 13). See viii. 26 (margin), for the same word. The time of day made the heavenly light the more remarkable and miraculous.

7. **The ground]** A noun peculiar to this verse, and different from that of ix. 4.

Saul, Saul] The Hebrew form of the word is used, as in ix. 4 (see note).

8. **Of Nazareth]** Or 'the Nazarene', words not mentioned in ix. 5. They add to the effect of the vision. The despised 'Nazarene' was the Lord of glory. See ii. 22; iv. 10, notes.

- that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And
- 10 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
- 11 to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were
- 12 with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, came
- 13 ^{1 Or, received my sight and looked upon him.} unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in
- 14 that very hour I ¹looked up on him. And he said,

9. Heard not the voice] See ix. 4, 7, notes. They did not hear any articulate tones or words. The Bezan text has 'and were afraid, but they heard not the voice, etc.' (cf. ix. 4, 7).

10. And I said, What shall I do?] A question pre-supposed in ix. 6, but not actually expressed there.

11. For the glory of that light] The cause of his blindness is not definitely stated in ix. 8. The effulgence of the divine glory had blotted out all other vision.

12. A devout man according to the law] For 'devout', see ii. 5; viii. 2, notes. The description of Ananias's piety, etc., is wanting in chapter ix, and was added here by St. Paul to shew his hearers how really orthodox Jewish Christians were. Ananias was a pious Hebrew, an observer, not a breaker, of the law of Moses. He would scarcely be likely, therefore, to promote anything impious or detrimental to the religious interests of his nation.

Well reported of] Held in high repute and esteem by all the Jewish community in Damascus. Cf. vi. 3. /

13. I looked up on him] See also the marginal reading, which brings out the double meaning of the verb. We have here a little natural touch wanting in ix. 18. Saul's first look, after

The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for 15 him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, 16 and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.

receiving his sight, fell on Ananias. It was a look of love and gratitude.

14. The God of our fathers] Cf. iii. 13. A title purposely employed by St. Paul to shew his hearers that Christianity is the true fulfilment of Judaism, and involves no break with the continuity of the past. Ananias's words are not fully mentioned in ix. 17, but are the natural outcome of the instructions given to him, as recorded in ix. 15-16.

Hath appointed thee] See iii. 20, note, for the same verb. The apostle was 'a vessel of election' (ix. 15).

Know His will] See Rom. xii. 2; Gal. i. 4; Eph. i. 5, 9, 11; v. 17; vi. 6; Col. i. 9; iv. 12; 1 Thess. iv. 3; v. 18. The will of God is man's salvation, sanctification, and the evangelization of the world. To know and do that will is the very essence of true religion. Before his conversion, Saul, in spite of all his religious zeal, had been acting in total ignorance of it (1 Tim. i. 13).

The Righteous One] See iii. 14; vii. 52, notes. The Messiah.

To hear a voice] A voice alike of *instruction* and *commission* (xxvi. 14-18).

15. A witness for Him] See i. 8, 22; ii. 32; etc. He was appointed to see the Righteous One and to hear His voice in order that he might testify of what he had so seen and heard.

Unto all men] Including, of course, the Gentiles, though the apostle refrains from uttering that word till the close of his address.

16. Arise] See viii. 26; ix. 6, notes.

- 17 And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a
 18 trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me.
 19 And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that

Be baptized] The verb is in the middle voice, implying that he had his part to do in connexion with baptism, 'get baptized'. See ii. 38, note.

Wash away] The verb is Paulo-Lukan, occurring again only in 1 Cor. vi. 11. See note on ii. 38. Baptism is the symbol and seal of cleansing from sin.

Calling on His name] See ii. 21; vii. 59; ix. 14, 21, notes. Faith is taken for granted (Rom. x. 14).

17. Returned to Jerusalem] As recorded in ix. 26-9; Gal. i. 18-19.

While I prayed in the temple] This incident is not narrated in ix. 29. It took place in the very temple where the people were now standing to hear his defence, and shewed that, though a Christian, he still honoured that temple.

A trance] See x. 10, note.

18. Make haste] His visit was thus curtailed to fifteen days (Gal. i. 18). The Lord knew the danger His servant ran and quickened his lingering steps (ix. 29).

19. They know] St. Paul had supposed that the testimony of an ex-zealot, once a leading opponent of the Gospel, would carry special weight with his former co-religionists and acquaintances; and that he possessed special qualifications for 'home-work' in Jerusalem. The first personal pronoun is emphatic all through verses 17-19. Facts, however, proved otherwise. It is often found that the preaching of a once prominent Hindu or Muhammadan, after becoming a Christian, is strongly resented by his former co-religionists. What they regard as his desertion of them and their cause appears to irritate them.

believed on thee: and when the blood of Stephen 20 thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will 21 send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.

And they gave him audience unto this word; and 22 they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should

I imprisoned and beat] Continually (present participles). The former verb is peculiar to this verse. Cf. viii. 3; xxvi. 11.

20. Stephen thy witness] The martyrdom had made an indelible impression on the mind of one of its chief instigators, and was, most likely, one of the influences leading to his conversion (vii. 60, note).

I also was standing by] Or 'standing over', as though superintending the execution (vii. 58, note).

Consenting] 'Willingly and gladly consenting' (viii. 1, note).

21. I will send thee forth] See ix. 30, for the same verb. *Here*, it is the supernatural direction which is emphasized; *there*, the natural circumstances.

Unto the Gentiles] St. Paul is shewing that his work among the Gentiles, which was the chief cause of the enmity of the Jews, was not of his own choosing and that it was only undertaken, with considerable reluctance, on a divine compulsion. But the very mention of the hated name proved to his hearers, as the Dravidian proverb has it, 'a red-hot iron thrust into their ears'.

22. They gave him audience] Imperfect tense, 'they continued listening' with attention till he uttered the word Gentiles. Then, all at once, they 'lifted up their voice' in fury and opposition.

Away . . from the earth] See xxi. 36, note.

It is not fit that he should live] The verb (Paulo-Lukan, Rom. i. 28) is in the imperfect tense, 'It was (all along)

23 live. And as they cried out, and threw off their
24 garments, and cast dust into the air, the chief captain
 commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding
 that he should be examined by scourging, that he might
 know for what cause they so shouted against him.

unfitting that he should live'; i. e. 'he ought not to have been preserved alive by the chief captain when we were about to kill him' (xxi. 31-2). Contrast God's opinion of Paul and men like him (Heb. xi. 38, 'of whom the world was not worthy').

23-30. PAUL AND LYSIAS

23. Threw off their garments] Some understand this as meaning that they 'flung off their upper garments' as though to stone Paul (vii. 58). It is better, however, to regard the expression as meaning that they either 'flung aside their garments' in uncontrollable anger, or, more probably, that 'they tossed them about' in their excitement. Cf. Luke xix. 35. The verb is used again in the Acts in xxvii. 19, 29. We may compare chapter xviii. 6. ♪

Cast dust into the air] Cf. 2 Sam. xvi. 13. An action due to intense excitement, and expressive of grief and anger. It is by no means unknown in India.

24. The chief captain] See xxi. 31, note.

The castle] See xxi. 34, note.

Examined by scourging] The verb '(examined)' is only found in this passage (v. 29), and specially denotes examination by torture. The noun 'scourge' or 'scourging' occurs in Mark iii. 10; v. 29, 34 ('plague'); Luke vii. 21 (margin); Heb. xi. 36. The chief captain was more than ever puzzled by the sudden outburst of frenzy, and decided to try and find out the reason by those methods of torture which were then all too common, and are not altogether unknown in eastern lands to-day.

Shouted] 'Continued shouting' (imperfect); the same verb as in xxi. 34.

And when they had tied him up ¹ with the thongs, 25
 Paul said unto the centurion that stood
 by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man ^{1 Or, for}
 that is a Roman, and uncondemned? And when the 26
 centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain, and
 told him, saying, What art thou about to do? for this
 man is a Roman. And the chief captain came, and said 27
 unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said,
 Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum 28

25. Tied him up] The Roman method of scourging was to strip the man and either tie him to a pillar in a bending position or to stretch him on a frame. He was then lashed with leathern thongs weighted with pieces of lead. The verb here used is peculiar to this verse, and means 'to stretch forward' into a position for scourging.

With the thongs] This rendering denotes the leathern straps with which they bound him in the necessary posture. If we adopt the marginal reading, 'for the thongs', which is at least as good, the thongs in question will be the leather scourges with which the beating was to be administered.

The centurion] See x. 1, note. The subordinate officer who was superintending the operations.

Is it lawful, etc.?) The Porcian law forbade the scourging of any Roman citizen.

A man that is a Roman] Cf. xvi. 37. Thus, again, St. Paul claimed the privilege of his Roman citizenship.

Uncondemned] See xvi. 37, note.

26. What art thou about to do?) The grave offence of scourging a Roman citizen would be visited with the severest penalties.

27. Thou] Emphatic. 'Can it be possible that *you* whom I took to be a good-for-nothing Jewish seditionist, are really a Roman citizen?'

28. With a great sum] The noun means, literally, 'capital', and so 'a sum of money'. It occurs again only in Heb.

- obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I
 29 am a Roman born. They then which were about to
 examine him straightway departed from him: and the
 chief captain also was afraid, when he knew that he
 was a Roman, and because he had bound him.:
 30 But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty,
 wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him,

viii. 1, in a different sense (chief point). It is known that, under the emperor Claudius, his wife Messalina and his chief ministers sold the Roman citizenship. It was most likely through having purchased the privilege under that emperor that the chief captain bore the name Claudius (Lysias). See xxiii. 26.

Citizenship] Properly speaking, this could only be had either (1) by *birth*, from citizen parents; or (2) *by grant*, in reward for political or other services to the State; or (3), in certain cases, *by manumission*.

But I] The 'I' is emphatic, and wears an air of dignity.

Am (a Roman) born] See Introd. V. 1. We do not know how St. Paul's family first became possessed of the privilege. We must distinguish his Roman citizenship from his Greek citizenship of Tarsus referred to in xxi. 39.

29. Examine] See v. 24, note.

Was afraid] Lest his conduct should be reported and he should incur the imperial displeasure. Cf. xvi. 38.

Because he had bound him] That is, ignominiously, for scourging (v. 25). A Bezan text says 'and he straightway loosed him'.

30. To know the certainty] See xxi. 34.

Loosed him] He had, of course, been released at once from the thongs which bound him to the whipping-post, and also, most likely, from at least one of the two chains mentioned in xxi. 33. But he had still been kept in military custody, bound, according to custom, by one chain to a soldier. He was now brought before the Sanhedrin unbound.

and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

The chief priests] See iv. 6, 23, notes.

The council] The Sanhedrin (iv. 5, note). It met at this time, most likely, in a chamber on the temple hill, not in the precincts of the temple itself.

Brought Paul down] From the fortress of Antonia (xxi. 31-2, notes).

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XXII

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) His defence before the Jews. vv. 1-21. A Jew to the Jews.
- (2) His bearing before the soldiers (Roman). vv. 22-30. A Gentile to the Gentiles.

II. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) St. Paul's admirable tact in speaking.
 - (a) Uses the national language. v. 2.

Brethren and fathers (v. 1).	}
The law of our fathers (v. 3).	
Zealous for God, as ye all are this day (v. 3).	
The brethren (v. 5).	
Devout according to the law (v. 12).	}
The God of our fathers (v. 14).	
 - (b) Adopts a courteous mode of address.

This Way. v. 4.	}
All men. v. 15.	
 - (c) Avoids terms likely to cause needless offence.
 - (d) Employs terms suitable and intelligible to his hearers. vv. 8, 12, 14.
 - (e) Shews how divine revelation guided and compelled him. vv. 6-10; 14-15; 17-21.

Yet states his case as a Christian missionary to the Gentiles clearly and firmly (vv. 8-10, 21).

- (2) A convert's testimony.

1 And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good con-

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| (a) Before conversion.
vv. 1-5. Opposition. | } | Birth irreproachable. v. 3.
Education strictly orthodox v. 3.
Zeal undeniable. vv. 3, 4.
Status strongly accredited. v. 5. |
|--|---|---|

But all anti-Christian.

- (b) At conversion. vv. 6-16. Submission.
- (c) After conversion. vv. 17-21. Special commission and service.

CHAPTER XXIII

1-11. PAUL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

1. Looking stedfastly] See i. 10, note. The verb is used of St. Paul again in xiii. 9; xiv. 9. He had been in the Sanhedrin in former days, possibly as a member of it (xxvi. 10, note), and doubtless saw before him a number of familiar faces.

Brethren] Contrast this more familiar mode of address with that of iv. 8; vii. 2. The apostle met the Jewish leaders on terms of friendly equality.

I have lived] A special verb, occurring again only in Phil. i. 27 (margin, to behave as a citizen). It denotes the conduct of a person as a member of a body, state, or commonwealth. Cf. the use of the cognate noun in Eph. ii. 12 (commonwealth). St. Paul is referring to his life as a member of the theocratic nation.

Before God] As though appealing from the judgment of men to a higher tribunal. Cf. 1 Cor. iv. 3-4; 1 Thess. ii. 10.

In all good conscience] The word for 'conscience' primarily means 'co-knowledge', the reflective knowledge which a man has in conjunction with his first consciousness of any given act. It was used freely by the Stoics, but has acquired a distinctively Christian connotation in New Testament usage. The word occurs about thirty times in the New Testament, chiefly in the Pauline Epistles. It denotes that moral consciousness or

science until this day. And the high priest Ananias **2** commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God **3** shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest

faculty which pronounces upon the character of actions. We read of

- (a) A good conscience. Acts xxiii. 1; 1 Tim. i. 19; Heb. xiii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 16, 21.
- (b) A conscience void of offence. Acts xxiv. 16.
- (c) A weak conscience. 1 Cor. viii. 7, 10, 12.
- (d) A pure conscience. 1 Tim. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3.
- (e) A seared conscience. 1 Tim. iv. 2.
- (f) A defiled conscience. Titus i. 15.
- (g) An evil conscience. Heb. x. 22.

St. Paul had sought in all things to live conscientiously, and the accusations brought against him had no foundation in fact. •

2. Ananias] Son of Nedebaeus, high priest A. D. 47-59. He received his appointment through Herod of Chalcis. On account of acts of violence against the Samaritans during his term of office, he was summoned to Rome for inquiry, but was acquitted through the influence of the younger Agrippa.

Josephus (Antiq. xx. 9. 2) describes his avariciousness and acts of robbery and violence. He seems to have been deposed towards the end of Felix's tenure of office as procurator. His treatment of St. Paul agrees with what we otherwise know of him. He met with a violent death at the hands of the 'Sicarii', some years after his deposition from office, in A. D. 66 (Josephus. Wars II. 17. 9).

Them that stood by him] That is, attendants.

To smite him on the mouth] Cf. John xviii. 22. As though to signify that he had spoken blasphemy with that mouth. Such a command was both illegal and overbearing.

3. God shall smite thee] Injustice, that is, will bring its own nemesis. For a moment Paul, maltreated almost beyond endurance, loses control of himself and breaks forth in

4 me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?
5 And Paul said, I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak

indignation. Note the faithfulness of the narrative. Where the apostle fails, his failure is recorded.

Thou whited wall] Cf. Matt. xxiii. 27. Fair to outward appearances, but concealing untold impurity within.

4. **Revilest thou God's high priest?**] The verb is used again in John ix. 28; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 23. The last of these references shews a strong contrast between our Lord's meek conduct under severe provocation and that of St. Paul on the present occasion. The Jews were required by their law to shew the utmost deference to the high priest, sitting as God's representative, so to speak, on the judgment seat (Deut. xvii. 8-13; cf. Exod. xxii. 8-9; Ps. lxxxii. 1; etc.).

5. **I wist not that he was high priest]** Or, better, 'I wist not that it was the high priest (who spoke).' Various interpretations of this statement have been suggested.

- (a) Some attribute St. Paul's failure to recognize the high priest to his supposed constitutional defect of vision.
- (b) Others, again, argue that St. Paul, on account of his long absence from Jerusalem, may have been unaware that Ananias was now occupant of the office; or that the latter may have been only temporarily acting as high priest at this juncture, which was a period of many irregularities.
- (c) It is suggested, also, that the apostle's real meaning is 'I did not reflect, when I spoke, that I was addressing the high priest' (cf. Luke xxiii. 34; Acts xii. 9, for such a use of the same verb).
- (d) Once more, it is claimed that, with various ex-high priests present in the Sanhedrin (iv. 23, note), Ananias may not have been actually president of that council (cf. iv. 6, note). Moreover, Edersheim and others have pointed out that the high priest did not always

evil of a ruler of thy people. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am

wear a distinctive dress when not engaged in actual public ministry. While it is difficult to decide on St. Paul's actual meaning, the most probable explanation lies in the direction of either (c) or (d).

It is written] In Exod. xxii. 28, almost verbatim according to the LXX. We notice the apostle's immediate willingness to acknowledge his fault, and his loyal submission to the authority of Holy Scripture. For an extension of the principle here enunciated to rulers in general, see Rom. xiii. 1-7; 1 Pet. ii. 13-17.

6. But when Paul perceived, etc.] We may reasonably assume that something further in the procedure of the Sanhedrin gave occasion for the apostle's next action. The words of v. 9 suggest that he was asked to make a defence and that he once more testified to the facts of his miraculous conversion. This, apparently, was differently received by the two great sections of the council, and then St. Paul raised his voice as here described. Our passage only contains a brief summary of the actual proceedings.

The one part were Sadducees, etc.] See iv. 1; v. 34, notes. The 'Pharisees' first came into prominence as a party during the Maccabaeen period, though they traced their origin back to a much earlier date. Their name means 'separated ones', and they were the strictly orthodox and religious party among the Jews. Feeling between them and the Sadducees ran as high as that between the Sh'ahs and the 'Sunnis' of Islám. Paul knew well, from former experience, the sharp cleavage which existed between the two sections.

Cried out] Imperfect tense, according to the oldest MSS.: 'he began to cry out', or 'he continued crying out'. Apparently, he afterwards regretted his action in so doing (xxiv. 21,

7 called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9 And there arose a great clamour: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if

note). The strain upon him must have been terrible and the difficulty of the situation extreme. He acted impetuously and perhaps unwisely.

I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees] Cf. Phil. iii. 5; 2 Tim. i. 3; and see Introd. V. 1. That is, he claims to belong to the party which stood for piety and religious faith and hope, as against that of cynicism and rationalism. He states, too, that his forefathers were men of like conviction and profession. St. Paul always claimed that his Christian faith did not run counter to the Jewish faith and hope rightly interpreted: he acted still as a Jew and claimed Jewish privileges. Christ was to him the Fulfiller of the Law. Even his strict Pharisee training led on to Christ.

Touching the hope and resurrection of the dead] Cf. ii. 26; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6-7; xxviii. 20. The phrase is usually understood to mean 'the hope of a resurrection of the dead', which hope the Pharisees held firmly and the Sadducees rejected. It may, however, be explained more literally as 'the hope (of Messianic blessing) and the resurrection of the dead'. Mark the continued emphasis on the resurrection (i. 22; ii. 24; iii. 15).

7. **A dissension]** See xv. 2, for the same word.

Was divided] The same verb as in xiv. 4, which see.

8. **For the Sadducees, etc.]** See iv. 1, note.

9. **A great clamour]** The council became like a frantic mob, clamouring aloud. It was almost as though some one had stood up in a mixed gathering of Muhammadans, Shi'ahs and Sunnis.

a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel? And 10 when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle.

And the night following the Lord stood by him, 11 and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

and cried aloud 'I am for the martyred Husain'. We can imagine the confusion which would ensue.

The scribes] See iv. 5, note.

Strove] Strenuously and constantly (imperfect). The compound verb is peculiar to this verse. All their energies were enlisted on the side of the more orthodox doctrines.

A spirit . . . or an angel] They would not acknowledge St. Paul's claim to have seen the ascended and glorified Christ, but were willing to allow a supernatural vision of some kind or other.

10. Dissension] The same word as in v. 7 and xv. 2.

The chief captain] See xxi. 31, note. Apparently, he was present to watch proceedings.

Torn in pieces] The verb is used again only in Mark v. 4. It shews how violent the scene must have been.

To go down] See xxi. 31, 32, notes.

Take him by force] The same verb as in viii. 39 (caught away). Cf. xxi. 35.

The castle] See xxi. 34, note.

11. The night following] He had passed through two days of great strain, spiritual and physical, and his long-cherished plan of conciliating the Jews as far as possible had been

12 And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which

hopelessly frustrated. Doubtless, he was feeling disappointed and dispirited, and reviewing the day's conflict with a sense of failure and mistake.

The Lord] That is, 'the Lord Jesus'.

Stood by him] Cf. xii. 7, for the same verb similarly used. For other like interpositions at important epochs, see xviii. 9; xxvii. 23.

Be of good cheer] The same verb occurs in the imperative, as here, in Matt. ix. 22; xiv. 27; Mark vi. 50; x. 49; John xvi. 33, passages which will repay study and comparison. The words must have reassured the apostle and made him feel that his bonds were no mistake, but a link in the chain of the divine purpose (Phil. i. 12-13).

Also at Rome] Cf. xix. 21, and note there. The sovereign Master was leading on His servant to the desired destination, but in an unsought for manner. /

12-35. PAUL SENT TO CAESAREA

12. Banded together] Literally, 'made a concourse' (the same verb as in xix. 40), for associating themselves together against Paul.

Bound themselves under a curse] Literally 'placed themselves under an anathema'. The verb only occurs in this passage (vv. 14, 21) and Mark xiv. 71; but the cognate noun is used in v. 14; Rom. ix. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 3; xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8-9. They 'devoted themselves' to destruction so to speak (placing themselves under the divine ban), in case they failed to execute their vow. Josephus (Antiq. xv. 8. 3-4) mentions a similar conspiracy against king Herod the Great on the part of ten men.

13. More than forty] A number more than sufficient to surround their victim and accomplish their object under favourable

made this conspiracy. And they came to the chief priests 14 and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the council 15 signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, or ever he come near, are

circumstances. They probably belonged either to the Sicarii (Assassins xxi. 38, note) or to the Zealots.

Conspiracy] A word peculiar to this verse, and signifying a confederacy made by oath.

14. The chief priests and elders] See iv. 5, 23, notes.

We have bound ourselves under a great curse] A Hebraism. Literally, 'we have anathematized ourselves with an anathema' (v. 12, note).

15. Do ye with the council signify, etc.] The Bezan text reads, 'We ask you to do this for us, when ye have summoned the council; signify, etc.'; a reading which suggests that the council was first to assemble and then the request to be made to the chief captain. For 'council', see iv. 5, 15.

Signify] A verb rendered 'inform' in xxiv. 1; xxv. 2, 15. Its root meaning is 'to make clear or plain'.

Bring him down] From the fortress of Antonia (xxi. 31-2, notes).

Judge of his case] A verb which occurs again only in xxiv. 22 (determine). It is used, forensically, of deciding a suit; but, in this verse, means merely 'to investigate and ascertain more fully'.

More^{exactly} (accurately)] See xviii. 25-6, for the same word (carefully).

Or ever he come near] That is, to the Sanhedrin.

- 16 ready to slay him. But Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, ¹ and he came and entered into the castle, and told Paul. And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath something to tell him. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring
- 17 ^{1 Or, having come in upon them, and he entered &c.}

16. Paul's sister's son] This is the only mention we have in the history of the apostle's relatives. It has been conjectured that the sister and her son resided in Jerusalem, but it is more likely that the youth had either come there as a student, like his uncle before him (xxii. 3), or that he had come to attend the Feast.

Heard of their lying-in-wait] The noun occurs again only in xxv. 3, while the cognate verb is found in v. 21; Luke xi. 54. Thus the word is Lukan. Ramsay and others think that this young man's knowledge of the conspiracy shews that he had access to the houses and counsels of some of the leading Jews and so affords incidental proof of the social importance of St. Paul's family. They suggest, further, that it points to the inference that some of the family at least were becoming reconciled to the fact of his conversion. But this, of course, is conjectural, and we know nothing certainly as to the way in which the youth became acquainted with the plot, though the marginal reading (having come in upon them), if we could press it, would offer an adequate explanation. News soon leaks out in the East.

The castle] See xxi. 34, note.

17. Centurions] See x. 1, note.

Young man] See vii. 58, note. The word is peculiar to the Acts (vv. 18, 22; vii. 58; xx. 9).

18. Paul the prisoner] A phrase used frequently of himself by the apostle in the Epistles of the captivity (Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; 2 Tim. i. 8; Philem. vv. 1, 9).

this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. And the chief captain took him by the hand, and **19** going aside asked him privately, What is that thou hast to tell me? And he said, The Jews have agreed to **20** ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. Do not thou there- **21** fore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee. So the chief cap- **22** tain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no

19. Took him by the hand] To encourage the young man's confidence (Bengel). The chief captain was anxious to shew kindness to Paul as a Roman citizen, after the mistake he had fallen into (xxii. 29).

Asked] See iv. 7, note. The same verb follows in the next verse (inquire).

20. Have agreed] A verb found again only in Luke xxii. 5; John ix. 22. Its New Testament usage is always of anti-Christian agreements.

Thou wouldest inquire] So the oldest MSS., implying that the proposed Sanhedrin inquiry was to be in the name, and on behalf, of the Roman chiliarch.

21. Lie in wait] See v. 16, note.

Have bound themselves, etc.] See v. 12, note.

The promise] That is, 'the promise to bring Paul down to the Sanhedrin'. This is the only verse of the New Testament in which the word is used of a human promise. See its use elsewhere in the Acts (i. 4; ii. 33, 39; vii. 17; xiii. 23, 32; xxvi. 6).

22. Let the young man go] See, for the same verb, xiii. 3; xix. 41, notes.

23 man that thou hast signified these things to me. And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, **Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsa-**
rea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen
24 two hundred, at the third hour of the night: and *he bade them* provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

Tell] A verb peculiar to this verse, and meaning 'to divulge' (anything).

Signified] See v. 15, for this verb.

23. Two of the centurions] There would be, in all, ten centurions under the authority of the chief captain (x. 1; xxi. 31, notes). The Greek seems to suggest that these two officers were selected as specially trustworthy men. The chief captain acted with characteristically soldierly promptitude and caution, knowing it to be his duty to protect a Roman citizen.

Make ready] The tense of the verb (aorist infinitive) implies complete action, 'have them in readiness'.

Soldiers] That is, fully armed infantry of the regular troops.

Horsemen threescore and ten] The Bezan text reads, 'horsemen a hundred', but this sounds like a later alteration to promote a round number.

Spearmen] The word so rendered is a very rare one, and is peculiar to this verse in the New Testament. It means, literally, 'graspers (of a weapon) by the right hand'. It appears to denote light-armed infantry of the irregular forces, who carried either spears or javelins or lances in their right hand.

The third hour of the night] That is, about 9 p.m.

24. Beasts] Meaning 'horses' here. The plural may imply a change of horses to accompany the apostle on his long journey.

Might set Paul thereon] The verb is Lukan (Luke x. 34; xix. 35), and the parallel passages are interesting.

And he wrote a letter after this form : 25

Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor 26
Felix, greeting. This man was seized by the Jews, and 27

Felix the governor] Antonius Felix, a Greek by birth, was the younger brother of Pallas, the emperor Claudius's favourite. The two brothers had formerly been slaves of Antonia, Claudius's mother, but she had made them 'freedmen' and advanced them. Pallas's influence at court procured Felix a military command in Samaria under the procurator Ventidius Cumanus; and, on the latter's degradation from office, Felix became procurator of Judaea in his stead (about A.D. 52). He proved to be a cruel, corrupt, and avaricious governor. Tacitus the historian tells us that 'he wielded the power of a king with the mind of a slave'. During his last two years of office, serious riots occurred in Caesarea between the Jewish and Syrian inhabitants, and Felix acted in a very high-handed manner. He was recalled to Rome to answer the charges against him, and only escaped condemnation through his brother's influence. He is then lost to view in history. The Bezan text adds, after 'Felix the governor', the words 'for he was afraid lest the Jews should seize and slay him (Paul), and he himself should be afterwards accused of having taken money (as a bribe)'. This sounds like a later addition to explain the chief captain's object in sending his prisoner to Caesarea.

After this form] The original letter would, of course, be written in the official Latin, so St. Luke gives us the form or manner and substance of it in Greek.)

26. Claudius Lysias] Here, for the first time, occurs the name of the chief captain (xxii. 28, note).

The most excellent] A Lukan word (Luke i. 3; Acts xxiv. 3; xxvi. 25), used in addressing persons of rank (see i. 1, note). It corresponds, somewhat, with the title 'your excellency', as addressed to governors in India.

27. Having learned that he was a Roman] Claudius Lysias places his own conduct in the best possible light, manipulating the facts to suit his purpose; and, of course, he suppresses what had been

was about to be slain of them, when I came upon them with the soldiers, and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And desiring to know the cause

28 wherefore they accused him, ¹ I brought him
 29 down unto their council: whom I found to
 be accused about questions of their law, but
 to have nothing laid to his charge worthy

of death or of bonds. And when it was shewn to me
 30 that there would be a plot against the man, I
 sent him to thee forthwith, charging his
 accusers also to speak against him before
 thee. ²

¹ Many ancient authorities add I brought him down unto their council.
² Many ancient authorities add Farewell.

So the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took
 31 Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. But
 32 on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with

illegal in his own procedure. It is prevarication to suppress or misrepresent any portion of the truth.

28. **Accused]** See xix. 38, note.

29. **Questions]** The same word as in xv. 2; xviii. 15, which see.

Laid to his charge] A noun in the Greek, corresponding to the verb 'accuse' (xix. 38, note). It is found again only in xxv. 16 (matter laid against him).

30. **Plot]** See ix. 24, note.

I sent] The epistolary aorist, meaning 'I am sending him (herewith)'.
 31. **Antipatris]** A city founded by Herod the Great, and so called in honour of his father. It was about thirty-five miles from Jerusalem, a little more than half-way to Caesarea. Here the party halted, being now beyond the reach of surprise.

32. **On the morrow]** Leaving Jerusalem about 9 p.m., they must have reached Antipatris, at latest, by 9 a.m. next morning, travelling through the night. The infantry then returned to Jerusalem, as the seventy cavalry were a sufficient escort for the remaining twenty-six miles or so of the journey.

him, and returned to the castle: and they, when they 33
 came to Cæsarea, and delivered the letter to the gov-
 ernor, presented Paul also before him. And when 34
 he had read it, he asked of what province he was;
 and when he understood that he was of Cilicia, I
 will hear thy cause, said he, when thine accusers 35
 also are come: and he commanded him to
 be kept in Herod's ^{1 Gr. Præ-} palace. _{torium.}

The castle] Their barracks in the fortress of Antonia (xxi. 34, note).

33. Cæsarea] See viii. 40, note. Judæa was now again part of the Roman province of Syria, its procurator residing in Cæsarea (xii. 23, note).

Delivered] Or 'gave up', a verb peculiar to this verse.

34. Of what province he was] Strictly rendered, 'of what kind of province he was', as though inquiring whether he belonged to a senatorial or an imperial province. If so, the answer, in this case, would be imperial (Introd. IV. 1). But the words may be used in a looser sense and rendered as in the text. In that case, we may either suppose that Felix was inquiring, generally, what province Paul belonged to, as a Roman citizen; or, more probably, that he asked with a view to ascertaining whether or no he had jurisdiction in Paul's case. As it happened, Cilicia, like Judæa, was attached at that period to the province of Syria, part of which province Felix was administering; and this brought the matter, practically, within his jurisdiction. The word for province occurs only here and in xxv. 1.

Cilicia] See vi. 9, note.

35. Will hear thy cause] The verb thus rendered is peculiar to this verse. It was often used by the Greeks, as here, of a judicial hearing.

Palace] Built by Herod the Great as a royal residence, and now occupied by the Roman procurator. The Romans called it

1 And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and *with* an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul.

'a praetorium' (margin), and it was a fortress (with a soldier-garrison) as well as a palace. The word occurs in a similar sense in Matt. xxvii. 27; Mark xv. 16; John xviii. 28, 33; xix. 9; and, with a different meaning, in Phil. i. 13. St. Paul was kept, in military custody, in the guard-room attached to the palace-garrison.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XXIII

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) Placed before the council. vv. 1-11.
- (2) Guarded in the castle. vv. 12-24.
- (3) Removed to Caesarea. vv. 25-35.

II. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) The Lord's over-ruling providence. His guiding hand.
 - (a) Divides the counsels of opponents. vv. 6-10.
 - (b) Encourages the faith of His servant. v. 11.
 - (c) Defeats the designs of the enemy. vv. 12-22.
 - (d) Employs the services of earthly rulers. vv. 23-35.

[Theological partisans (v. 9), relatives (vv. 16-22), soldiers (vv. 23-31), and civil rulers (vv. 22-35) all made use of to further God's missionary plans and purposes.]
- (2) The apostle's vicissitudes of experience.
 - (a) Smitten by ecclesiastical leaders. vv. 2-4.
 - (b) Fought over by rival factions. vv. 6-10.
 - (c) Cheered by the Lord's special presence. v. 11.
 - (d) Endangered by fanatical conspirators. vv. 12-15.
 - (e) Assisted by a friendly relative. vv. 16-22.
 - (f) Protected by military power. vv. 23-31.
 - (g) Guarded by a Roman governor. vv. 32-5.

CHAPTER XXIV

PAUL BEFORE FELIX. SPEECHES OF TERTULLUS AND PAUL

1. After five days] These have been variously reckoned from his apprehension in Jerusalem, his departure to Caesarea, and

And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse² him, saying,

Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation,

his arrival at the latter city. On the whole, it seems most probable that they are computed from the day of the conspiracy (xxiii. 12), on the evening of which the apostle was removed from Jerusalem. Reckoning that as the first day of the 'five', the trial at Caesarea may be supposed to have taken place on the fifth day (v. 11, note). As St. Paul probably arrived in Caesarea on the evening of the second of the days so reckoned, this would leave ample time for his accusers to follow more leisurely.

Ananias] As chief accuser. See xxiii. 2, note.

Came down] See xviii. 22, note.

Certain elders] Representatives of the Sanhedrin (iv. 5, note).

An orator] The word is peculiar to this verse. It denotes, etymologically, 'a skilled speaker' rather than a barrister,—one trained in the art of rhetoric. But we may regard the man, for practical purposes, as corresponding, in Indian phraseology, to a trained and eloquent vakeel.

Tertullus] A diminutive form of the Latin name Tertius. He was probably one of the numerous Roman practitioners who exercised their profession in the outlying provinces of the empire, just as many English barristers follow their avocation in India. The Jews would employ him as being versed in Roman legal procedure, and able to plead their cause eloquently in the Latin tongue.

Informed] The same verb as in xxiii. 15, 22 (signify), but used here in its technical legal sense, 'they laid a clear indictment' against Paul.

2. **Began]** See i. 1, note.

By thee we enjoy much peace] It is true that Felix had suppressed 'the brigands who infested Judaea, and that he had driven off the Egyptian impostor (xxi. 38, note) and dispersed his followers. He also quelled riots as they arose from time

3 we accept it in all ways and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I intreat thee to hear

to time. Tertullus alludes to this in flattering style, though Felix had, otherwise, given much cause for discontent. He had even caused the high priest Jonathan to be assassinated by the Sicarii.

Providence] Or 'foresight'. The word is used again only in Rom. xiii. 14. Since the Romans attributed 'providence' to their gods, there is a tone of flattery in Tertullus's use of the word.

Evils are corrected] Literally 'Reforms are taking place'. This particular word for reform occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The reforms or corrections in question must be the suppression of the disorders already referred to, as we know of no other.

For this nation] That is, the Jewish nation.

3. We accept it] A Lukan verb (Luke viii. 40; ix. 11; Acts ii. 41; xviii. 27; xxi. 17; xxviii. 30). It means here 'we gladly receive and acknowledge such benefits'.

In all ways] An adverb peculiar to this verse. It means 'in every way', 'by all means', 'entirely'.

In all places] An adverb used in the Acts again in xvii. 30; xxviii. 22. Tertullus uses the hyperbolic and exaggerated language of flattery.

Most excellent Felix] See xxiii. 26, notes.

4. Be not tedious unto thee] The same verb is found in Rom. xv. 22; Gal. v. 7; 1 Thess. ii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 7, where it is rendered 'hinder'. It means 'to place obstacles in the way of anyone'. Tertullus, with obsequious courtesy, suggests that the governor is so busy in beneficial administration that he is reluctant to trespass on his time or hinder his work.

Clemency] A Paulo-Lukan word (2 Cor. x. 1) denoting, 'literally, 'yieldingness', the willingness to give place to another, even against one's own strict rights.

us of thy clemency a few words. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout ^{1 Gr. the in-habited earth.} the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: who moreover assayed to profane the

A few words] An adverb in the original, peculiar to this verse, 'briefly', 'concisely'.

5. A pestilent fellow] More briefly, 'a pest', 'a plague', 'a (public) nuisance'. The word suggests that St. Paul was a dangerous person who infected society with his pernicious conduct and teaching. It occurs only here in the New Testament.

A mover of insurrections] That is, so to speak, 'a seditionist' or 'factionist'. The word for insurrection is the same as in xv. 2; xix. 40; xxiii. 7, 10 (dissension, riot).

A ringleader] Literally 'A front-rank man (in an army)'. The word is peculiar to this verse. The apostle led the van, so to speak, of the Christian army.

Sect] 'A religious party'; the same word as in ch. v. 17; xv. 5; xxiv. 14; xxvi. 5; xxviii. 22.

The Nazarenes] The term is used of Christ in ii. 22; iii. 6; iv. 10; vi. 14; xxii. 8; xxvi. 9. It is here, for the first time, applied to His followers. In the lips of opponents, it was already a term of contempt (vi. 14, note), and was to come more and more into vogue among the Jews as their name for the despised and hated Christians. It is interesting to note that the term yet lingers on, (Nazranis) in the Cochin State of the Indian Malabar Coast as the usual title for a body of Syrian Christians there. ¶

6. Assayed] The vain surmise of xxi. 29 is now stereotyped into a definite belief and accusation, except that he is now accused not of actually defiling the temple but only of attempting to do so.

To profane] This verb is found again only in Matt. xii. 5. but a cognate adjective is used in 1 Tim. i. 9; iv. 7; vi. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 16; Heb. xii. 16. The word is derived from the idea

- 1 Some ancient authorities insert and we would have judged him according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come before thee.
- 8 temple: on whom also we laid hold: ¹ from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. And the Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that these things were so.
- 9 And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered,
- 10

of unlawfully treading on sanctified ground, stepping over a forbidden threshold (cf. xxi. 29, note).

We laid hold] 'Forcibly laid hold'. The remainder of v. 6 and the whole of v. 7 are omitted by the majority of ancient MSS., as the margin shews; though they are found in the Bezan text, the oldest versions, etc. The text is certainly bald without them and sounds incomplete.

8. From whom] As the text stands, this refers to St. Paul, from whose lips Felix might ascertain the facts, on careful inquiry. If, however, the words which have been relegated to the margin be inserted, it will mean that Claudius Lysias is the person from whom Felix is directed to elicit information; and v. 22 seems to favour this view.

Examining] See iv. 9, note.

9. Joined in the charge] Literally 'Joined in attacking (Paul)'. This rendering represents a verb peculiar to this verse.

Affirming] A Paulo-Lukan verb (xxv. 19; Rom. i. 22). In classical usage, it savours of 'pretending'. It will be seen that the charge against the apostle was threefold. He was accused (1) of a *political* crime (a pest and a mover of insurrections, v. 5); (2) of a *religious* crime (a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, v. 5); and (3) of a *particular* offence (assayed to profane the temple, v. 6). In xxv. 8, St. Paul categorically denies all three offences.

Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do cheerfully make my defence: seeing that thou canst take knowledge, 11 that it is not more than twelve days since I went up

10. Beckoned] From the raised tribunal on which he was seated (xviii. 12, note). This particular verb occurs again only in John xiii. 24, where a widely different scene is portrayed.

Of many years] According to the Roman historian Tacitus, Felix had occupied an official position of much importance during the procuratorship of Cumanus (xxiii. 24, note), apparently administering Samaria, while Cumanus devoted his care to Galilee. Cumanus was procurator A. D. 48-52. Josephus does not mention Felix's office in Samaria, but merely relates how he succeeded Cumanus as procurator (A. D. 52). Supposing Paul's trial before Felix to have taken place in A. D. 57, we have a period of five years at least, and, on the testimony of Tacitus, one of eight or nine years, during which Felix was a judge in that part of the country. So long a continuance in office was unusual among Roman governors, etc. See also verse 17, note.

Cheerfully] An adverb peculiar to this verse, though its companion adjective is found in xxvii. 36, and the cognate verb in xxvii. 22, 25; Jas. v. 13. A comparison of these passages will shew that Christian cheerfulness is to be exercised even under false accusations, stress of storm and danger, and circumstance of sickness and suffering.

Make my defence] See xix. 33, note.

11. Not more than twelve days] And therefore the truth about such recent events would be easily ascertainable. Moreover, since this was at least the fifth day since Paul had left Jerusalem (v. 1, note), it left an incredibly short time (only a week) for exciting the faction and insurrection of which he stood accused. The 'twelve days' are differently computed by different commentators. We may reckon them as follows. The *first* day saw the interview with James and the presbyters (xxi. 18); the *second* witnessed Paul undertaking the vows in the

- 12 to worship at Jerusalem: and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city.
- 13 Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof

temple (xxi. 26); the *third, fourth, fifth, and sixth* days were occupied in connexion with those vows; the *seventh* was the day of his arrest (being the sixth of the seven days of purification referred to in xxi. 27); on the *eighth*, he stood before the Sanhedrin (xxii. 30); on the *ninth*, the conspiracy was formed against him (xxiii. 12), and he left Jerusalem after dark; on the evening of the *tenth* day, he arrived in Caesarea (xxiii. 32); on the *eleventh and twelfth* days he awaited in custody the coming of his accusers; and now, after the expiration of the twelve days in question, being the fifth since the forming of the conspiracy against him (v. 1, note), he is arraigned before Felix.

Went up] See xviii. 22, note.

To worship] Not to: profane the temple, or to raise an insurrection.

12. Did they find me] The same verb as in v. 5, to which reference is thus made. Tertullus's assertion is thereby emphatically denied.

Disputing] See xvii. 2, note. Public reasoning and disputing might have led to ill-feeling among the Jews, but he had refrained even from that.

Stirring up a crowd] Literally 'making a stoppage (of the people)', as though to incite them to insurrection. The noun is Paulo-Lukan, being used again only in 2 Cor. xi. 28 of a 'thing pressing upon one'.

Synagogues] See vi. 9, note. Neither within the places of Jewish worship nor without in the streets had he either preached or gathered a crowd. Thus he meets the political charge with a flat contradiction (v. 9, note).

13. Prove] By setting forth arguments. The verb is so used classically, but elsewhere in the New Testament it means merely 'to present'.

they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee, 14
 that after the Way which they call ¹ a sect,
 so serve I the God of our fathers, believing ^{1 Or, heresy}
 all things which are according to the law, and which are
 written in the prophets: having hope toward ¹⁵
 God, which these also themselves ² look for, ^{2 Or, accept}
 that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and

14. I confess] While repudiating any religious offence (v. 9, note), he boldly avows himself a Christian.

The Way] See ix. 2, note.

A sect] The same word as in v. 5 (ch. v. 17, note). It is the one which has since come into vogue as 'heresy', though it did not connote that idea in St. Paul's time. See margin. Here it merely indicates 'a religious sect', as differentiated from orthodox Judaism. It corresponds, somewhat, with the Indian word 'mata' (sect, or school of thought).

Serve] The apostle uses a word (*λατρεύειν*) which to Greek-speaking Jews, was specially associated with the temple worship, though by no means confined to it.

The God of our fathers] See xxii. 3, note, 'the ancestral God (of the Jews)'. St. Paul had not severed himself from anything that was good and true in the religion of his people; much less had he forsaken the God of his forefathers.

Believing, etc.] He here professes his sincere faith in the Jewish Scriptures, which were often divided into 'the law' and 'the prophets' (Matt. vii. 12; xi. 13; xxii. 40; Luke xvi. 16; John i. 45), though a tripartite division was also in vogue (Luke xxiv. 44). Thus he held by the Bible as well as the God of His people.

15. Hope] Cf. xxiii. 6, where also 'resurrection' is in juxtaposition.

These also themselves look for] He is referring to the Jews present as representing the nation generally, without regard to the unorthodox Sadducees.

16 unjust. Herein do I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God

17 and men always. Now after ¹many years 1 Or, some

I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings:

A resurrection both of the just and unjust] Cf. Dan. xii. 2; John v. 29; 1 Thess. iv. 16; Rev. xx. 4-6, 12, 13, where also the resurrection of the saints is distinguished from that of the wicked. In this statement, he could rely in the main on the endorsement of all the Pharisees and orthodox Jews (xxiii. 6-9). There was nothing sectarian in such doctrines, though the addition of the words 'and unjust' might meet with criticism. Those words, however, were peculiarly calculated to touch Felix's conscience.

16. Herein] That is, either 'on this account'; or 'in this faith and hope'.

I exercise myself] This verb, peculiar to this verse, means 'to practise, train, exercise', like an athlete. It speaks of self-discipline and earnest endeavour. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 26-7.

A conscience] See xxiii. 1, note.

Void of offence] A Paulo-Lukan adjective (1 Cor. x. 32; Phil. i. 10). It has a double meaning, the one with a transitive force, 'without causing others to stumble'; the other with an intransitive force, 'without stumbling'. The rendering of the text covers both. Both conscience and conduct are to be thus characterized, and that 'before God and men', continually and always. Such a man could scarcely be a danger or menace to true religion.

17. After many years] Literally 'After more years' (margin, some). Only about four years could have elapsed since his previous visit, on the eve of the third missionary journey, but the apostle may be speaking of the whole period which had expired during his work among the Gentiles.

Alms] See iii. 2, note; and cf. xx. 4, note. He is referring to the collections for their needy Jewish brethren made so diligently by the Gentile Christians. This is the only mention of

amidst which they found me purified in the temple, 18
 with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but ^{1 Or. in pre-}
there were certain Jews from Asia—who ^{sending which} 9
 ought to have been here before thee, and to make
 accusation, if they had aught against me. Or else let 20
 these men themselves say what wrong-doing they

them in the Acts, though they are prominent in the Pauline Epistles.

And offerings] That is, 'temple offerings'. These may refer to the sacrifices which he had undertaken on behalf of the four Nazirites (xxi. 26), the sentence being elliptical, 'I came to Jerusalem to bring alms to my nation, and I entered into the temple to make offerings'. Or, as some think, St. Paul may have intended, on his own account, to offer special thankofferings for journeying and other mercies, and so have united his personal gifts with the sacrifices of the Nazirites. He is now replying to the third charge of a particular and sacrilegious offence (v. 9, note).

[8. Amidst which] That is, 'amidst which offerings', as indicated by the marginal reading (in presenting which). So far from assaying to profane the temple, he was in the act of reverently presenting offerings there.

They found me] 'Worshipping, not seditionizing or acting sacrilegiously, as they said' (v. 5, where the same verb is used).

Purified] See xxi. 26, note. The very opposite of profanation (v. 6).

Tumult] The same word as in xx. 1; xxi. 34 (uproar).

But (there were) certain Jews from Asia] The sentence is left grammatically unfinished, and is characteristic of St. Paul's earnest and often abrupt style. He does not say what he thinks of them, but breaks off to point out that they ought to be present as chief witnesses.

20. Let these men themselves say] He asks for definite evidence as to any misconduct on his part from those present

21 found, when I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day.

22 But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your

since the Asian Jews were absent. Indefinite charges should go for nothing.

Wrong-doing] See xviii. 14, note, for the same word (wrong).

21. **Except it be for this one voice]** Many think that Paul is speaking ironically, 'The only wrong-doing they can point out in me, perchance, is my saying about the resurrection, a matter in which many of them really support me'. Or, possibly, his meaning is 'The Sadducees among them may, indeed, regard my speaking up for the resurrection as a fault'. It seems more likely, however, that the apostle is expressing regret that he had acted in such a manner in the Sanhedrin. He felt, perhaps, that he had acted on 'policy', rather than been content with quietly and firmly witnessing to the Gospel. It is only brave and good men who readily acknowledge the mistakes they have made.

22. **Having more exact knowledge, etc.]** Literally 'knowing the things concerning the Way more accurately' (than St. Paul's accusers had represented). He had been too long in the province to be misled by such gross misrepresentations about Christians, who were now numerous and were to be found even in Caesarea itself. It does not follow, of course, that he was acquainted with the doctrines of the Gospel. He was much in the position of a Hindu magistrate who may have a general impression that Christianity is a good religion, without having really studied the New Testament. For 'accurately,' see xviii. 25-6 (carefully).

The Way] See ix. 2, note.

Deferred them] The verb is used technically, and is peculiar to this verse. Felix adjourned the case, and 'put off' the Jews

matter. And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him. 23

But after certain days, Felix, came with Drusilla, his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith 24

1 Gr. his own wife.

for the present. He found it inconvenient to give a decision at once, and made Lysias's absence the excuse. He knew Paul to be innocent; on the other hand, he did not wish to offend the Jews.

Lysias] See xxiii. 26.

Shall come down] From Jerusalem (xviii. 22, note).

I will determine] See xxiii. 15, note.

23. The centurion] See x. 1, note. The definite article may indicate the officer specially responsible for Paul's safety.

Be kept in charge] The verb implies no more than safe custody.

Indulgence] A Paulo-Lukan word (2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 5; viii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 7; relief, ease, rest). It implies a relaxation of tension. The rules of custody were relaxed as far as possible, and every reasonable relief afforded him.

His friends] Among whom may have been Philip and other local Christians (xxi. 8, 12), with Luke and Aristarchus (xxvii. 2).

To minister] He had 'ministered' to others (xx. 34), and that gladly. Now others 'minister' to him. We may suppose that they both rendered personal service and helped to supply his pecuniary needs.

24-27. FELIX'S INTERCOURSE WITH PAUL

24. After certain days] See ix. 19, note. A short time only is intended.

25 in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned of righteousness,

Came] This may mean 'came back to Caesarea (from circuit)'; or it may only mean 'came to a room of audience'.

Drusilla] Youngest of the three daughters of Herod Agrippa I (xii. 1), her elder sisters being Berenice (xxv. 13) and Mariamne. She was only six years old when her father died in A. D. 44, and so was now about nineteen years of age. She had been married, when only aged fourteen, to Azizus, king of Emesa. Felix, as Josephus tells us (Antiq. xx. 7. 2), became enamoured of her beauty and employed a Cyprian sorcerer named Simon to persuade her to forsake her husband and marry him. She bore him one son, Agrippa, who perished, in the company either of his wife or his mother, in an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in the reign of the emperor Titus.

His wife] His second wife. His first wife had also, curiously enough, borne the name of Drusilla, being the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. Apparently, he married, later, a third wife whose name is unknown, since Suetonius calls him 'the husband of three queens'.

A Jewess] And so, probably, interested to some extent in the phenomenon of the spread of Christianity among her people. The Bezan text adds 'who asked to see Paul and hear the word. Being willing therefore to satisfy her, he (sent for Paul, etc.)', thus ascribing the episode which follows to Drusilla's curiosity and desire.

Sent for] See x. 5, note (fetch). Paul was lodged in the guard room of the palace, and so was close at hand.

The faith in Christ Jesus] See ii. 36. We may understand the phrase to mean either 'his (Paul's) faith in Christ Jesus'; or as denoting, practically, the Christian religion considered as a system of faith in the Messiah-Saviour. Apart from his wife's interest in the matter, Felix had doubtless been struck by Paul's earnestness, sincerity, and holy courage during his trial.

25. Reasoned] See xvii. 2, note. The scene is striking, as the whole-hearted missionary of Jesus Christ stands, like another John the Baptist, pleading the cause of right and truth before

and ¹ temperance, and the judgement to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way ^{1 Or, self-control} for this time; and when I have a convenient

the Roman libertine governor and his profligate wife. To St. Paul, repentance unto righteousness was the first step towards sincere faith in Christ (ii. 38; xx. 21).

Righteousness] A word which occurs some sixty times in the Pauline Epistles. The Epistle to the Romans, in particular, is full of it, and shews us, to some extent, what the apostle would have to say on the subject, as he dealt with the guilt of sin and man's need of a Saviour. Felix's private life and public administration had been marked by unrighteousness all through, and St. Paul must have been aware of it, as he condemned sin boldly, without fear or favour.

Temperance:] Better, as in margin, 'self-control', a word used with special reference to continence from sensual sin. It occurs again in Gal. v. 23; 2 Pet. i. 6. The consciences of Felix and Drusilla must have winced as St. Paul was speaking, for they had both been guilty in this respect. ♣

The judgement to come] See x. 42; xvii. 31, notes. Felix, the unjust judge, would one day have to stand himself for trial before a more august and all-righteous tribunal.

Was terrified] See x. 4, note, for the same word (affrighted). Felix's guilty conscience was roused, and he trembled at the prospect of divine judgment. It was, however, the alarm of guilty fear, not a true conviction of sin.

Go thy way for this time] More literally, 'For the present go thy way', with emphasis on 'the present'. Instead of 'winnowing while the wind blows', as the Indian proverb has it, he procrastinated and would not honestly face the fact and the consequences of sin. To such a man, delay was fatal. As another Indian proverb has it, 'To say "to-morrow" is to say "never"'.
 1

When I have a convenient season] More literally, 'I will take an opportunity later, etc.'. He never made an opportunity for

26 season, I will call thee unto me. He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with 27 him. But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was

hearing such unwelcome truths again, though he often sent for the apostle afterwards with other objects (v. 26). Like iron which becomes harder when cooled after heating, man's heart becomes more obdurate after it has been stirred to no purpose. There are many in India to-day who were once deeply conscious of sin and of their need of Christ, but who are now hard and opposed because of their resistance of God's Holy Spirit.

Will call thee unto me] See vii. 14, note, for the same verb.

26. That money would be given him] Paul's own reference to the contributions he had brought for the Jews (v. 17), together with his accusers' description of him as a 'front-rank-man' among the Christians (v. 5), may have led Felix to suppose that he had considerable resources at his back. Bribery and corruption, though illegal, were only too common among Roman officials, etc. (cf. xii. 20, note). We need to be on our guard against such evils in India to-day. Felix, however, had mistaken his man. St. Paul not only *preached* righteousness, but also *practised* it. 'Thus unhappy Felix (false to his name of happy), let go the treasure of the Gospel (in his desire for earthly pelf)' (Bengel).

Sent for] The same verb as in v. 24.

The oftener] A Paulo-Lukan word (Luke v. 33; 1 Tim. v. 23). The interviews seem to have been many and frequent.

Communed] The same verb as in xx. 11 (talked with), which see. It speaks of friendly conversation, not of religious inquiry.

27. When two years, etc.] That is, dating from St. Paul's trial. He was thus detained in custody two years in Caesarea. During this period, the party jealousies which constantly existed between the Jews and Syrians of that city culminated in an open

succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favour with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

fight. When the Jewish faction refused to disperse, Felix sent soldiery who slew some of them and plundered their houses. He was accused at Rome in consequence, and had to proceed thither to answer the charges lodged against him.

Was succeeded by] Literally 'received as his successor', the word 'successor' being peculiar to this verse.

Porcius Festus] There is considerable doubt about the date of his assuming office, but it was probably in A.D. 59 (Intro. VII). His procuratorship was of comparatively brief duration, as he died, most probably, in A.D. 61-2, being succeeded by Albinus. Josephus gives him a fairly good character, and he was certainly more upright in every way than Felix. He rigorously put down the Sicarii. The chief events of his term of office were (1) the emperor's decision in favour of the Syrians at Caesarea, as against the Jews,—and (2) grave disturbances at Jerusalem because of the building of a wall at the temple to intercept the view from Agrippa's palace. He was a typical Roman official, indifferent to the religious tenets and disputes of the Jews.

Desiring to gain favour with the Jews] In view of the accusations which they had launched against him in Rome. The phrase really means 'to lay down favour or thanks for himself (as a deposit)', so as to reap good interest from the deposit. The Bezan text substitutes a different reason for his action, 'But Paul he left in ward for the sake of Drusilla'. The Jews may have solicited her interest in their favour; or, like Herodias (Matt. xiv. 3-4), she may have been incensed by Paul's plain speaking against her sin.

Left Paul in bonds] Some have thought that this indicates a severer custody than that mentioned in v. 23, but there is nothing actually to support this. He had been a military prisoner all through the two years, and so remained at Felix's departure.

1 ¹ Or, *having entered upon his province* Festus therefore, ¹ having come into the province, after three days went up to

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XXIV.

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) The false charge. vv. 1-9.
- (2) The firm defence. vv. 10-21.
- (3) The fickle judge. vv. 22-7.
 - Otherwise. (1) Felix in public. vv. 1-22. His influential office.
 - (2) Felix in private. vv. 23-7. His corrupt life.

II. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) Paul before Felix. vv. 10-21. His vindication. A man with a good conscience.
 - (a) His courtesy of demeanour. vv. 10-11.
 - (b) His contradiction of false charges. vv. 12-13.
 - (c) His confession of faith. vv. 14-15. In the true God. In the Holy Scriptures. In the resurrection hope.
 - (d) His conscientiousness of character (and conduct). v. 16.
 - (e) His confutation of slanders. vv. 17-21. A true patriot. A sincere worshipper. A peaceful citizen.
- (2) Felix before Paul. vv. 22-6. A man with an evil conscience.
 - (a) He respected highly the religion of Christ. vv. 22-3.
 - (b) He summoned voluntarily the messenger of God. v. 24.
 - (c) He listened patiently to the message of the Gospel. v. 24.
 - (d) He trembled greatly under the force of truth. v. 25.
 - (e) He procrastinated fatally the matter of repentance. v. 25.
 - (f) He resisted finally the strivings of God's Spirit. v. 26.

All through the chapter, the contrast between Paul the sincere Christian and Felix the insincere worldling.

Jerusalem from Cæsarea. And the chief priests and the 2 principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, asking favour against him, 3 that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying wait

is strong and striking. Felix was unwilling to give up his love of the world, the flesh, and filthy lucre. Paul had given up all to win Christ.

CHAPTER XXV

1-12. PAUL AND FESTUS

1. **Festus]** See xxiv. 27.

Having come into] The same verb as in xx. 18 (set foot in). The margin gives the better meaning.

Province] See xxiii. 34, note.

After three days] He lost no time in head-quarters. After Felix's unpopularity with the Jews, he would naturally wish to ingratiate himself with them as far as was compatible with his official duties. Jerusalem was their national centre.

Went up] See xviii. 22, note. It was the Jewish capital, just as Caesarea was the political capital.

2. **The chief priests]** See iv. 23, note. Doubtless they were headed by Ananias.

The principal men] Cf. Luke xix. 47. The word used seems to differentiate them from the 'elders' or 'Sanhedrin' as a body. It was probably the Sadducean aristocracy who took the initiative before Festus.

Informed him] See xxiv. 1, and references there, for the same verb.

3. **Besought him]** Repeatedly and importunately (imperfect tense).

Asking favour] Rather than justice. Cf. xxiv. 27. It would be difficult for the new governor to refuse favours to those whom he wished to conciliate.

4 to kill him on the way. Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Cæsarea, and that he
 5 himself was about to depart *thither* shortly. Let them therefore, saith he, which are of power among you, go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him.

6 And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought.

Send for him] The same verb as in xxiv. 24, 26 (see x. 5, note).

Laying wait] See xxiii. 16, note.

4. **Howbeit Festus]** His Roman sense of justice would not allow him to yield to their importunities, though Paul must have appeared to him, at that juncture, only an insignificant prisoner.

Was kept] The same verb as in xxiv. 23. The tense (present infinitive) shews Festus's meaning to be, 'He is in custody there, not here; and so any inquiry desired must be made on the spot'. In other words, he politely refused the Jews' request.

5. **Let them which are of power]** Cf. the use of the same word in 1 Cor. i. 26 (mighty). It means 'persons of position and influence'.

Go down with] See xviii. 22. The verb here is a compound form of the simpler one there, and is found only in this verse.

Amiss] Paulo-Lukan (Luke xxiii. 41; ch. xxviii. 6; 2 Thess. iii. 2). It means primarily 'out of place', and then 'irregular, perverse, outrageous'.

6. **Not more than eight or ten days]** A new governor would wish to return to the seat of government as soon as possible, for reasons of official business.

And when he was come, the Jews which had⁷ come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges, which they could not prove; while Paul said in his⁸ defence, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I sinned at all. But Festus, desiring to gain favour with the⁹ Jews, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before

7. Stood round about him] To accuse and oppose,—like wolves round a lamb, ready to tear him to pieces if an opportunity were afforded them.

Charges] A word found nowhere else in this particular form. The indictment of xxiv. 5-6 was now added to by unscrupulous foes.

8. Said in his defence] See xix. 33; xxiv. 10.

Neither against the law, etc.] He denies *seriatim* all those offences which he had been categorically charged with (xxiv. 9, note); (a) the *religious* one (against the law of the Jews); (b) the *particular*, sacrilegious one (against the temple); and (c) the *political* one (against Caesar). He protests his innocence, in other words, of the crimes of heresy, sacrilege, and treason.

9. Desiring to gain favour] The same phrase as in xxiv. 27, which see. Festus now saw clearly that St. Paul was guilty of no crime against the laws of Rome, and that the question involved was a Jewish religious one (vv. 18-19). To him, such a question counted for nothing. He thought it, however, a good opportunity for pleasing the Jews by referring such theological matters to the Sanhedrin. He could not do this, however, in the case of a Roman citizen without his consent. We cannot clear Festus of blame in being ready to act so partially and unjustly.

Go up] See xviii. 22, note.

Before me] That is, 'By the Sanhedrin, in my presence'.

10 me? But Paul said, I am standing before Cæsar's judgement-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well
 11 knowest. If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if none of those things is true, whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar.

¹ Gr. grant me by favour and so in ver. 16.

10. Caesar's judgement-seat] For the procurator was the emperor's representative. Just so, a man arraigned before one of the High Courts of India may be regarded as standing 'before the king-emperor's judgement-seat'. For 'judgement-seat', see xviii. 12, note.

Where I ought to be judged] 'Both according to law, and by virtue of my Roman citizenship.'

As thou also very well knowest] Festus had convinced himself that the enmity of the Jews against Paul was due entirely to theological prejudice (vv. 18-19), and that he had done nothing illegal. He had no right, therefore, to make any such proposal, but should have set the prisoner at liberty.

11. Worthy of death] According to the Roman law, that is.

I refuse not to die] Or, 'I do not beg off dying'. The verb employed corresponds with our word deprecate.

Can give me up unto them] The verb is cognate with the noun 'favour' of v. 9, and so the margin expresses better the force of the original, 'no man can grant me by favour unto them'. It was Festus's duty as a judge to do justice, not to shew favour.

I appeal unto Cæsar] Every Roman citizen, with the exception of notorious criminals, had the right of appeal to be heard by the emperor himself. St. Paul saw that he could not expect justice from the procurator. He therefore pronounced the words which immediately removed his case from the jurisdiction of all lower courts and transferred it to the emperor's

Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, **12** answered, Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

Now when certain days were passed, Agrippa the king **13** and Bernice arrived at Cæsarea, ¹ and saluted 1 Or, having saluted

court at Rome. He had now lingered in captivity for more than two years in Cæsarea. This is another of the great crises of the Acts of the Apostles. Paul the missionary utters those momentous words which remove his cause and his work to the imperial city.

12. The council] The word is only used elsewhere by the evangelists Matthew and Mark, and that always in the sense of taking 'counsel'. Here, however, it denotes the assessors, those higher legal and other officials who were associated with provincial governors for purposes of consultation. It was as though an Indian provincial governor laid an important matter before his co-adjutors in the executive and the decision were then given by 'the governor in council'.

Unto Cæsar shalt thou go] Festus could not disallow the appeal, save at his own peril. The case was now beyond his jurisdiction, and so he gives, as by duty bound, his formal and official permission to transfer the cause to Rome. It proved to be God's way of leading St. Paul to be His witness in the great city. His hand had been overruling the whole course of the prolonged legal process at Cæsarea.

13-22. FESTUS AND AGRIPPA

13. Certain days] See ix. 19, note.

Agrippa the king] Agrippa II, son of Herod Agrippa I (xii. 1). When his father died, he was a youth of seventeen years old, living at Rome, where he was brought up at the court of the emperor Claudius. When his uncle Herod, king of Chalcis (a district of Syria, north-west of Damascus) died some eight years later, the emperor conferred that principality on Agrippa. In A. D. 53, he gave it up, and received instead the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias (Luke iii. 1) with the title of 'king'.

- 14 Festus. And as they tarried there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix: about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, asking for sentence

The government of part of Galilee and Petraea was added later by Nero. Caesarea Philippi, in Galilee, was his capital. He was the last of the Herodian dynasty to exercise sovereignty. After the fall of Jerusalem (A. D. 70), he retired to Rome, where he died about A. D. 100.

Bernice] Eldest daughter of Agrippa I, and sister of Drusilla (xxiv. 24). She was one year younger than her brother Agrippa II, being sixteen years old when her father died. When only thirteen years of age, she was married to her uncle Herod of Chalcis and bore him two sons. At his death in A. D. 48, she came to reside with her brother, and the ugliest rumours were afloat as to their relationship, both among the Jews and Romans. To still these rumours, she married Ptolemon, king of Cilicia, but soon left him and returned to Agrippa. Later, she became the mistress of Titus, son of the emperor Vespasian. He discarded her in Rome on becoming emperor, and she seems to have passed her last days there in the house of Agrippa.

Arrived at] See xvi. 1, note.

Saluted Festus] It was a formal visit of state by a client king to the new Roman governor. Similarly, in India, the rulers of Native States pay formal visits of respect to a new viceroy or governor, who then returns the visit.

14. **Laid . . . before]** A Paulo-Lukan verb (Gal. ii. 2). It means 'to relate, with a view to consulting'. From his intimate knowledge of Jewish affairs, coupled with his attachment to Roman rule, Agrippa was likely to prove the best possible adviser. He held, moreover, the office of superintendent of the temple, with the power of appointing the high priest.

15. **Chief priests and elders]** See iv. 5, 23, notes.

against him. To whom I answered, that it is not **16** the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defence concerning the matter laid against him. When **17** therefore they were come together here, I made no delay, but on the next day sat down on the judgement-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they **18** brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed;

Informed] See xxiv. 1; xxv. 2.

Sentence] A noun peculiar to this verse. It means here, of course, a sentence of condemnation.

16. The custom] See vi. 14, note. The Romans were proud of their 'custom' of strict and equal justice. Unfortunately, men like Felix, and even men like Festus, belied the boast.

To give up any man] The same verb as in v. 11, where see note. Festus himself had been ready to 'give up' Paul 'by favour', at least in some degree, but he is silent on that point in speaking to Agrippa. It is true, however, that he had brought the accused and his accusers face to face.

Defence] See xxii. 1, note.

The matter laid against him] See xxiii. 29, note, for the same word.

17. Delay] A noun peculiar to this verse, but cognate with the verb 'deferred' of xxiv. 22.

Judgement-seat] See xviii. 12, note.

18. Supposed] See xiii. 25. The tense is imperfect (as is also that of the verb brought), shewing that Festus had been conjecturing various things in his mind to account for the strong ill-feeling against Paul.

- 19 but had certain questions against him of their own
^{1 Or, super-} ¹ religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead,
^{stition}
 20 whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And I, being
 perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked
 whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged
 21 of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be
^{2 Gr. the} kept for the decision of ² the emperor, I
^{Augustus.} commanded him to be kept till I should send

19. Questions] See xv. 2; xviii. 15; xxiii. 29; xxvi. 3.

Religion] Margin, 'superstition'. This noun is found only here, but is cognate with the word rendered 'superstitious' in xvii. 22, which see. It is used here, of course, in its better sense of 'religion', since Agrippa also professed the Jewish faith.

Of one Jesus, etc.] This is exactly how the matter would strike a Roman like Festus, who had no personal interest in the great point at issue. It shows, too, that the battle between Paul and his accusers continued to wage round the doctrine of our Lord's resurrection.

Affirmed] Constantly and repeatedly (imperfect). For the same verb, see xxiv. 9.

20. Being perplexed] A verb found elsewhere in Luke xxiv. 4; John xiii. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 8; Gal. iv. 20, and meaning 'to be without means or resources', and so 'to be perplexed and at a loss'. The parallel passages make an interesting study. Festus was hopelessly puzzled over Paul's case, not knowing what to do.

How to inquire concerning these things] Literally 'as regards the questioning concerning these things'. This may be taken, as in the text, to refer to Festus's inquiry; or it may be taken to denote the 'questioning' between Paul and the Jews which was beyond the Roman's ken and puzzled him (see xv. 2, for the same noun). The context strongly favours the latter view.

21. Decision] A noun peculiar to this verse, but cognate with the verb 'determine' of xxiv. 22.

him to Cæsar. And Agrippa *said* unto Festus, I 22
also ¹ could wish to hear the man myself. 1 Or, *would wish*
To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him.

So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and 23
Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into
the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and the
principal men of the city, at the command of Festus

The emperor] The Greek word (Sebastos) is the equivalent of the Latin 'Augustus' (see margin), a title conferred on the first emperor Octavian Caesar, and inherited by his successors. It was regarded as one of peculiar honour and sacredness. Indeed, the Greek form of it is derived from the root 'to worship', and suggests more than human glory. Festus, most likely, purposely spoke of 'the Augustus' in addressing a vassal king, the better to enhance the emperor's dignity and claims. The nearest modern representative of it would be 'His imperial majesty', which would naturally be employed, under similar circumstances, of our king-emperor.

Send] Literally 'send up (to a higher authority)'. A Paul-Lukan verb (Luke xxiii. 7, 11, 15; Philem. 12).

22. I also could wish] The imperfect tense (see margin) shews that Agrippa had entertained the desire for some time. He had evidently heard of St. Paul and the antipathy of the Jews to him. Compare Herod Antipas's desire to see and hear Christ (Luke xxiii. 8). The reading of the text regards the imperfect tense as expressing an indirect request of politeness. ♣

23-7. PAUL BROUGHT BEFORE AGRIPPA

23. Pomp] A noun peculiar to this verse. It has passed into use in English with a somewhat different meaning, 'phantasy'. The scene recalls their father's ostentatious display in the same city, with his ignominious death (xii. 21-3).

The place of hearing] Also a noun peculiar to this verse, 'the auditorium' or 'hall of audience', attached to the palace. In Indian parlance, 'the sabhâ-mandapam'.

24 Paul was brought in. And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying
25 that he ought not to live any longer. But I found
 1 Gr. *the* that he had committed nothing worthy of
Augustus. death: and as he himself appealed to 1 the

The chief captains] The 'chiliarchs' (xxi. 31, note). Josephus says that five cohorts were stationed at Caesarea (x. 1, note), so that there would be a number of chiliarchs or military tribunes there.

Principal men] Including, no doubt, the chief officials and notable citizens. So illustrious a gathering gave the apostle a splendid opportunity for witnessing to the Gospel. It was a special royal 'darbar', so to speak.

24. King Agrippa] He was, apparently, given the place of honour for the occasion. Cf. xxvi. 30.

Ye behold] See iii. 16, note.

All the multitude of the Jews] A fact additional to the narrative of v. 2. The authorities at Jerusalem had been backed up in their complaints by a crowd of the people.

Made suit] A verb used exclusively in other passages of the New Testament of intercession addressed to God (Rom. viii. 27, 34; xi. 2; Heb. vii. 25). After the words 'and here', the Bezan text has a long insertion, 'That I should deliver him up to death. But I could not deliver him up without any defence, because of the orders which we have from the Augustus. But if any man were willing to accuse him, I said he might follow me to Caesarea where he was guarded in custody. And when they were come, they cried out that he should be slain. But, after hearing both sides, I found him in no respect worthy of death. And when I asked him if he were willing to be judged at Jerusalem, he appealed unto Caesar'.

25. The emperor] 'The Augustus' (v. 21, note).

emperor I determined to send him. Of whom I have 26
no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I
have brought him forth before you, and specially before
thee, king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I may
have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me un- 27
reasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify
the charges against him.

26. Certain] See xxi. 34; xxii. 30.

My lord] The Greek word (*κύριος*) corresponds to the Latin 'dominus', a title which had been refused by both Octavian and Tiberius as trespassing on the prerogatives of deity and as savouring of despotism. Caligula, however, accepted it, as did also his successors. It became a usual appellation of the emperors.

Examination] The word is peculiar to this verse. It denotes, technically, 'a preliminary inquiry', but is used here in a looser sense of an 'investigation' into Paul's case.

27. Unreasonable] The word occurs again only in 2 Pet. ii. 12; Jude 10. It was customary, in such appeal cases, to send 'letters of dismissal' with the appellant, explaining the charges against him.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XXV

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) The artifice (of the Jews). vv. 1-5.
- (2) The appeal (of Paul to Caesar). vv. 6-12.
- (3) The assessor (of Festus, viz. Agrippa). vv. 13-27.

II. *Prominent topics.*

- (1) God's overruling of political circumstances.
 - (a) The advent of a new governor. vv. 1-8.
 - (b) The right of appeal to the emperor. vv. 9-12.
 - (c) The state visit of a vassal king. vv. 13-22.
 - (d) The concourse of state officials. vv. 23-7.

All made subservient to His missionary purposes.

1 And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence:

(2) Studies of character.

(a) The Sadducees and their enmity. vv. 1-7.

(b) Paul and his full integrity. vv. 8, 10-11.

(c) Felix and his worldly policy. vv. 4-5, 9, 14-21.

(d) Agrippa and his pompous ceremony. vv. 13, 22, 24, 26.

CHAPTER XXVI

1-29. PAUL'S SPEECH BEFORE AGRIPPA

This is remarkable alike for its earnestness, tactfulness, and elegance of style. It contains many words which are nowhere else found in the New Testament. The occasion, the circumstances, the greatness of the opportunity all combined to inspire the apostle to make a supreme effort to testify to the Gospel of salvation before he left Palestine for ever, and to put forth this noble 'apology' for his position as a Christian convert. It was as though a notable Indian convert, who had long been misrepresented and misunderstood, were unexpectedly given the opportunity of explaining, to a special gathering of Indian princes and influential persons, the why and wherefore of his being a Christian and a missionary.

1. Agrippa] See xxv. 13, note.

Then Paul] The Bezan text adds 'being of good courage and taking comfort in the Holy Ghost'. The words, even should they be a later addition, express a sacred fact.

Stretched forth his hand] See xx. 34; xxi. 40, notes. This time, at least, it was no mere action to command silence, but the characteristic gesture of an earnest speaker.

Made his defence] The great Pauline 'apology for his life'. See xix. 33, note, for the same verb, which occurs again in the next verse also.

I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews:

¹ especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life then from my youth up, which was ⁴ from the beginning among mine own nation, and at

³ *1 Or, because thou art especially expert*

2. Think myself happy] We mark St. Paul's perfect courtesy, free from all adulation. Agrippa was well acquainted with Jewish concerns, political and ecclesiastical alike, whereas Festus was an alien and a new-comer.

Am accused] See xix. 38, note.

By the Jews] Better, 'by Jews'. There is no definite article in the Greek, and the omission of it, both here and throughout the address (vv. 3, 4, 7, 21; 'Jews,' not 'the Jews'), lays emphasis on their national and religious characteristics. It was men of Jewish race and faith, not aliens, who accused him; and so Agrippa, being himself a Jew, could understand the case as no Gentile could. In a similar way, we should speak of being misrepresented by Hindus or Muhammadans or Buddhists in India or Ceylon.

3. Expert] One of the words peculiar to this speech, 'one who knows (anything) well'.

Customs and questions] For the former of these, see vi. 14; and, for the latter, xv. 2. *Habits* of practice and *theories* of doctrine and belief.

Patiently] Another word peculiar, in its adverbial form; to this speech.

4. Manner of life] This word also is used only here. It includes both *being* and *doing*, both *life* and *conduct*.

From my youth up] He had come to Jerusalem from Tarsus when quite a boy, and received an orthodox Jewish education

5 Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, how that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a
6 Pharisee. And now I stand *here* to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers;

there, becoming well known as a Hebrew enthusiast. This point is purposely emphasized (cf. xxii. 3). Both at Tarsus and Jerusalem, he had been a Jewish bigot.

5. Straitest] A purely classical superlative of an adjective found only here in the New Testament. It is cognate with the adverb used in xviii. 25-6; xxiii. 15, 20; xxiv. 22 (carefully, exactly,—meaning accurately), as also with the noun employed in xxii. 3 (strict manner), where see note. No orthodox Hindu pandit could follow his *sástras* and caste rules more punctiliously than Saul had followed the traditions, customs, and religious observances of the Jews.

Sect] See ch. v. 17, note.

Religion] A word only found again in Col. ii. 18; Jas. i. 26-7. It denotes religion under the aspect of external rites and forms. Judaism, as followed by the Pharisees, was pre-eminently a system of ritualism and externalism (Intro. VI. 7); and Hinduism, Buddhism and Muhammadanism are, for the most part, similarly characterized. St. Paul found, in the Gospel, a religion of faith, love, and holiness.

Pharisee] See xxiii. 6, note; and cf. Phil. iii. 5. The Pharisees were the orthodox Bráhmans of Judaism.

6. The hope] See xxiii. 6, note. He alludes both to the Messianic expectations and the resurrection hope of the Jews.

The promise] Of the Messiah, involving both the doctrine of the resurrection and the glory of His kingdom. This 'promise' runs all through the Old Testament, and is both illustrated by types and emphasized and reiterated in prophetic utterances. Cf. xiii. 23-9. On the Messiahship and resurrection of the Lord Jesus the whole question between Jew and Christian turns. Granted these, the Jew becomes at once a Christian.

unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that

Unto our fathers] St. Paul holds to the continuity of the past. Cf. iii. 13; xxiv. 14. He is a true patriot, through and through.

7. Twelve tribes] Another word peculiar to this speech. It is the phrase of a *pukka* Jew expecting, on the strength of the promises, the future reunion of the scattered tribes of Israel (cf. Rom. xi. 25-7). Notice the reiteration of the personal pronoun 'our'.

Earnestly] Literally, 'In (or, with) earnestness'. The noun occurs only here, but is cognate with the adverb used in xii. 5; where see note. St. Paul credits his people with 'intensity' in their religious conduct, however mistaken their zeal.

Serving] See xxiv. 14, for the same verb.

Night and day] See xx. 31, note. In the case of Anna, who looked so earnestly for the Messiah, the phrase is joined with the same verb 'serve' or 'worship' (Luke ii. 37).

To attain] See xvi. 1, for the same verb (come to); and cf. Phil. iii. 11; Eph. iv. 13.

Concerning this hope] 'This Messianic-resurrection hope', and not any heretical doctrines or irregular practices. The apostle claims to be the true Jew in having accepted the long-promised Messiah. He deems it strange that Jews, of all men, should brand him as a heretic.

I am accused] Repeated from v. 2. See xix. 38; note.

8. If God doth raise] The sense is, of course, 'as He has done in the case of Jesus Christ.' The whole controversy with the Sadducees hinged on this doctrine; and all through the Acts it is the keystone of apostolic teaching (ii. 24, 32; iii. 15; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 40-1; xiii. 30-1; xvii. 3, 31).

I ought to do many things contrary to the name of
 10 Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem:
 and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having
 received authority from the chief priests, and when they
 were put to death, I gave my vote against them.

9. I] Emphatic. 'I, the Jewish bigot, *for my part*, was anti-Christian enough to begin with.'

To do] 'To practise (habitually).' The verb denotes the scope and character of his activity.

To the name of] That is, 'to the cause and authority of'. For this, and for the expression 'Jesus of Nazareth', see iii. 6, note.

10. I did] A different verb from that used in v. 9. This one indicates the actual deeds which were the result of his attitude.

Shut up] An exclusively Lukan verb (Luke iii. 20).

The saints] See ix. 13, 32, 41.

When they were put to death] Cf. xxii. 4. There were, clearly, other martyrs besides St. Stephen. The present tense points to the actual time of their execution.

I gave my vote] The word 'vote' means, literally, the stone or pebble with which the vote was recorded. It occurs again only in Rev. ii. 17 (stone). If the expression be taken quite literally, it will mean that Saul was a member of the Sanhedrin before his conversion, and, as such, gave his vote like the other Sanhedrists. This view is strongly advocated by some, and has much to be said in its favour. In that case, we should have to suppose that he was elected to that important body because of his prominence as a Jewish propagandist; as also, apparently, that he had been previously married,—a qualification required in members of the Sanhedrin,—though subsequently becoming a widower (1 Cor. vii. 7). On the other hand, it is urged that he was too young for membership in such a council of 'elders', and that the phrase may be used

And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. ¹ Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission ¹ *OR, On* ¹² *which errand*

more loosely as merely indicating that he gave his full consent (xxii. 20).

[1. Punishing] See xxii. 5, note. The added words 'oftentimes' and 'in all the synagogues' shew how thorough his persecuting campaign had been. Saul did nothing by halves. We know that there were many 'synagogues' in Jerusalem (vi. 9).

[I strove to make them] Literally, 'I continued to compel (constrain) them'.

[To blaspheme] That is, to revile Jesus Christ (xiii. 45, note).

[Being . . . mad against] A word peculiar to this speech. It is a compound of the simpler one used in v. 24. He deplores his madness as a persecuting Jew; Festus calls him mad as an enthusiastic Christian.

[I persecuted] Imperfect tense. Either 'I set about persecuting'; or, more probably, 'I went on persecuting'.

[Even unto foreign cities] We may understand either that he actually carried his persecuting zeal to other outside cities besides Damascus; or that he was bent on doing so when arrested by the Saviour. It will depend on the force we give to the imperfect tense of the verb persecuted.

[12. Whereupon] The margin gives the meaning clearly, 'on which errand'. We should carefully compare this third account of his conversion with those contained in chapters ix and xxii. Only the details unmentioned before need be noticed here.

[Commission] Another of the words peculiar to this address. It is cognate with the verb 'permit' used in v. 1, and in chapter xxi. 39-40. St. Paul purposely lays stress on the

13 of the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with
 14 me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language,
 1 Gr. *goads*. Saul. Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against ¹the goad.

authority and 'right of decision' given him by the Sanhedrin. He was the 'high commissioner', so to speak, of the Jewish Inquisition.

13. At midday] A different expression to the one used in xxii. 6, and one even better calculated to emphasize the supernatural character of a light flashing out in the full noonday.

Above the brightness of the sun] A new feature in the narrative. The word brightness is found only here.

Shining round about] A Lukan verb (Luke ii. 9), used again only of the light seen by the shepherds at our Lord's nativity. It differs from that employed in ix. 3; xxii. 6.

14. Were all fallen] And not Saul alone (ix. 4; xxii. 7). The verb 'fall down' is peculiar to the Acts (xxviii. 6). After the word 'earth', the Bezan text adds 'for fear', and continues 'I alone (heard, etc.)'.

In the Hebrew language] See i. 19, note. Hence the Hebrew form of the name Sha'ul (ix. 4, note).

It is hard for thee to kick against the goad] A proverbial expression known to both Greeks and Romans, and easily intelligible to us in India, where we are only too accustomed to see goads used by drivers to urge on the bullocks which are yoked in their cart. To kick against a sharp goad only leads to the infliction of new wounds and to the experience of fresh pain. Saul's rebellion against the will of God could only lead to self-inflicted trouble, the greater in proportion to the vehemence of his persecuting zeal. Some have seen in the words, also, an allusion to the 'prickings' of conscience which he

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I 15
 am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand 16
 upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee,
 to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the
 things ¹ wherein thou hast seen me, and of 1 Many an-
 cient au-
 thorities
 read which
 thou hast seen
 the things wherein I will appear unto thee;
 delivering thee from the people, and from 17

may have felt from time to time underneath his anti-Christian violence.

16. And stand upon thy feet] An additional feature in the narrative. Cf. Ezek. ii. 1.

To this end, etc.] The words which follow, to the end of v. 18, may be regarded as equivalent to the message conveyed to him by Ananias, who is not mentioned here (ix. 15-16). They form the Lord's commission to His servant Paul, whether given directly or through the medium of another.

Appoint] See iii. 20, note.

A minister] See xiii. 5, note (attendant); and cf. Luke i. 2. 'Minister' speaks of service, and 'witness' of testifying.

The things wherein thou hast seen me] That is, 'the fact and circumstances and results of having really seen Me'. Only eyewitnesses could be true apostles (1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8).

The things wherein I will appear unto thee] Christ appeared more than once to Paul after his conversion (xviii. 9; xxii. 17-21; xxiii. 11), and also vouchsafed him special revelations (2 Cor. xii. 1-4).

17. Delivering thee] Cf. Jer. i. 7-10. The phrase may, also be rendered 'choosing thee out of', and some take it so (cf. ix. 15); but the reading of the text seems best.

The people] That is, the Jewish people (x. 2, note).

Unto whom] That is, both Jews and Gentiles, but especially the latter.

18 the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their
^{1 Or, to turn} eyes, ¹ that they may turn from darkness
^{them} to light, and from the power of Satan unto
 God, that they may receive remission of sins and an
 inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in

I send thee] The verb (*apostello*), though more general in usage, is yet peculiarly suited to denote the apostolic commission, which St. Paul thus received from the risen Lord Himself (*Gal. i. 1*).

18. To open their eyes] Metaphorically, of course. Cf. *Isa. xxxv. 5*; *John viii. 12*; *ix. 39-41*.

That they may turn] As the result of their eyes being opened. This is better than the marginal reading which gives the verb a transitive force. Such 'turning' is what we call 'conversion' (cf. *iii. 19*; *ix. 35*; *xi. 21*).

From darkness to light] Cf. *Matt. iv. 16*; *Rom. xiii. 12*; *Eph. v. 8*; *Col. i. 12-13*; *1 Thess. v. 5*; *1 Pet. ii. 9*; *1 John ii. 8*; 'darkness' being the symbol for sin and ignorance, while 'light' stands for truth and holiness.

From the power of Satan] Better, 'from the authority of Satan,' meaning his tyranny. Unconverted men are represented as being under his despotic control. Cf. *John viii. 44*; *Eph. ii. 2-3*; *1 John v. 19*. For 'Satan,' see *ch. v. 3*, note.

That they may receive] As the result of their 'turning'.

Remission of sins] See *ii. 38*, note.

An inheritance among them that are sanctified] See *xx. 32*, note. The word here used for 'inheritance' (*lot*) suggests the allotment of the promised land of Canaan and the 'portion' which each received, as a metaphor of spiritual things (cf. *Col. i. 12*).

By faith in me] Faith is the instrument by which, on the human side, we are sanctified. It is the hand, so to speak, which appropriates the holiness of Christ (*1 Cor. i. 30*). Cf. *iii. 16 xv. 9*.

me. Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient **19** unto the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of **20** Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of

19. Disobedient] A Paulo-Lukan word (Luke i. 17; Rom. i. 30; 2:Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 16; iii. 3). He had yielded himself entirely to the heavenly Master, to be henceforth His 'bondservant'.

Vision] Also Paulo-Lukan (Luke i. 22; xxiv. 23; 2 Cor. xii. 1).

20. Declared] Continually (imperfect). A summary, rather than a chronologically arranged account, of the apostle's work, is possibly intended in this verse.

Damascus first, and at Jerusalem] This agrees, of course, with ix. 20-9.

Throughout all the country of Judæa] This cannot chronologically follow his first evangelistic work in Damascus and Jerusalem (Gal. i. 21-3); but he may have preached throughout Judæa at a later date (e.g. when he took famine relief there with Barnabas, xi. 30; xii. 25, notes). He may be purposely mentioning his evangelistic efforts among the Jews, in order of fitness rather than time (Rom. i. 16). Blass, Ramsay, and others, however, would read 'in every land, both to Jews and Gentiles'.

Also to the Gentiles] It would seem that the speaker intentionally places them last, though they formed his most important and special field of labour (cf. xxii. 18-21).

Repent] See ii. 38, note.

Turn to God] See ix. 35, note.

Doing] As a habitual practice (v. 9, note).

Works worthy of repentance] Cf. Luke iii. 8-14. Real repentance and sincere faith lead to true amendment of life according to God's holy will (cf. Luke xix. 8; 2 Cor. vii. 10-11), and to rectitude of conduct.

- 21 ¹ Or, *their repentance* ¹ repentance. For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me.
- 22 Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and
- 23 ² Or, *if Or, whether* Moses did say should come; ² bow that the Christ ³ must suffer, *and* ² how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

21. For this cause] Literally, 'on account of these things,' i. e. 'my conversion to God and my preaching to Jew and Gentile alike'.

Kill] A strong word, for which see ch. v. 30, note.

22. Help] A word peculiar to this verse. Its etymology suggests that he had God for his 'ally', to succour him in every hour of need. 'The help that is from God' is the aid which He alone can give.

I stand] Safe, firm, unmoved. Cf. Rom. v. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 1; Eph. vi. 13-14; Col. iv. 12. It is the attitude of a staunch warrior, unmoved by dangers, holding his ground for Christ.

The prophets and Moses] See xxiv. 14, note. He stands by the truth of Holy Scripture.

23. Must suffer] Another word peculiar to this speech. Literally, 'subject to suffering' or 'destined to suffering'. To the Jews, the idea of a suffering Messiah was repellent; yet their Scriptures were full of it (e. g. Isa. liii.). Cf. Luke xxiv. 26, 46.

He first, etc.] Christ was the 'firstfruits' of the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 20-3), the 'first begotten from the dead' (Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5); and His resurrection was the inauguration of a new kingdom of life and light and liberty, as well as the pledge of the Christian's victory over sin and death.

Resurrection] See i. 22, note.

And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with 24 a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning doth turn thee to madness. But Paul saith, I am not 25 mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of

Should proclaim] His rising from the dead was itself a message of emancipation, and He, being risen, sent forth His witnesses to preach the Gospel of salvation.

Light] See v. 18, note; and cf. Luke ii. 32. It connotes spiritual knowledge (2 Cor. iv. 6), life (John i. 4), peace (Luke i. 79), truth (Eph. v. 9), holiness (John iii. 19-20).

To the people and to the Gentiles] As in v. 17, 'Jews and Gentiles'.

24. As he thus made his defence] See v. 1, and reference there. St. Paul was suddenly interrupted while yet speaking.

With a loud voice] The cynical Roman could as little understand the doctrine of the resurrection as the Athenian 'sástris' (xvii. 32), and the speaker's religious enthusiasm was beyond his comprehension, He therefore broke in with a loud exclamation, full of impatience and surprise.

Thou art mad] See xii. 15, note, for the same verb. To the Roman governor, Paul seemed a religious fanatic, and a similar charge has been brought against enthusiasts in all ages.

Thy much learning] Literally, 'the many writings' (or, letters). Cf. John vii. 15. This may denote either much study or learning in general, or sacred learning in particular, with special reference to the Jewish Scriptures of which Paul had been speaking so much.

Doth turn thee] A verb peculiar to this verse. Literally, 'doth turn thee round' or 'doth turn thee upside down'. So, in English, we speak of 'a man's head being turned'. The noun 'madness' also occurs only here.

25. Most excellent Festus] See xxiii. 26, note. Paul is not betrayed by such a charge either into impatience or into forgetfulness of due courtesy and decorum. He has learned his lesson (xxiii. 3-5).

- 26 truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; 27 for this hath not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. 28 And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion

Speak forth] See ii. 4, for the same special verb. The apostle, like his fellow-Christians on the day of Pentecost, was speaking out clearly under divine inspiration.

Soberness] A Paulo-Lukan word (1 Tim. ii. 9, 15). Cognate forms are frequent in the Pastoral Epistles. It is the antithesis of 'madness' or 'frenzy', and indicates a reasonable condition of entire control over the senses and desires.

26. **The king]** St. Paul appeals from the Roman sceptic to the Jewish prince, whose acquaintance with the religious beliefs and customs of his people qualified him to understand the points at issue.

I speak freely] The word rendered 'freely' is really a participle of the verb used in ix. 27 (which see) and elsewhere (to preach boldly). St. Paul felt that he could use boldness and freedom of speech before Agrippa.

Hidden] Cf. Mark vii. 24; Luke viii. 47, for instances of the use of the same verb. St. Paul assumes that Agrippa must have heard of Christ and His followers, since such a stir had been created by the Gospel in the Holy Land.

This] Referring specially to the resurrection, as we may believe.

27. **King Agrippa]** The personal appeal may have been prompted partly by signs of eager interest or, possibly, uneasiness visible in Agrippa's face or manner.

I know that thou believest] As one who professed to take a keen interest in the Jewish religion, Agrippa would be ready to acknowledge the authority of the prophetic Scriptures, and to yield them at least an intellectual assent. His, however, was not the faith of the heart.

thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. And Paul 29 *said*, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, 30

28. With but little persuasion, etc.] Literally, 'In (or with) a little thou persuadest me, so as to make me a Christian.' The ellipsis has been variously supplied; e.g. 'in a little (time), i.e. very quickly'; or, 'with a little (speech)', i.e. 'in few words' (cf. Eph. iii. 3, where the same phrase is rendered 'in few words'); or, again, 'with a little (effort or persuasion)', as in the text, i.e. 'very easily'. Agrippa is usually understood, therefore, to be speaking in a tone of irony, 'You think, it would seem, to make me a Christian very easily'. St. Paul's reply, however, hardly bears this out, and Agrippa's later remarks are serious enough (v. 32). We may understand, therefore, that the king was rather parrying St. Paul's question by saying 'I see your object. You are seeking to make me a Christian, and are bringing your powers of persuasion to bear upon me, in some small measure at least, to that end'. For the apostle's persuasive powers, see xvii. 4, note. Agrippa may have been feeling the influence of those powers.

Chrysostom, Cyril, and others rendered 'Almost thou persuadest me, etc.', but the Greek will hardly bear that meaning. In any case, the construction is very unusual and difficult.

Christian] See xi. 26, note.

29. Whether with little or with much] The word 'persuasion' being understood, to fit the preceding verse. Paul, at least, was in dead earnest about the matter, and ready to expend every energy to make men true believers. The contrast between the Jewish worldling and the Christian advocate is forcible.

30-32. THE CONCLUSION OF THE INQUIRY

30. The king rose up] From the place of chief honour, to end the interview. He did not care to receive any more of St. Paul's

31 and they that sat with them: and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This
 32 man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

home-thrusts. He was followed by the rest, in due order of precedence. The verb 'sat with' is Lukan, occurring again only in Luke xxii. 55, an interesting parallel from a more famous trial.

Doeth] See v. 9, note.

32. Might have been set at liberty] Thus Festus's acknowledgement that Paul was innocent from the point of view of Roman law (xxv. 25) is confirmed by the decision of Agrippa, speaking from the Jewish point of view. The appeal to Cæsar, however, had taken the matter out of local jurisdiction. Possibly, Agrippa's opinion influenced the terms of the letter which Festus drafted to Rome about Paul's case.

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XXVI

I. *Principal divisions.*

- (1) Paul's personal testimony. vv. 1-23.
- (2) Paul's pointed appeal. vv. 24-9.
- (3) Agrippa's clear verdict. vv. 30-2.

II. *Prominent topics.*

(1) Paul before Agrippa. His great 'defence'.

- (a) His great courtesy. vv. 2, 3, 25.
- (b) His true testimony. vv. 4-23.

Once,—a sectarian bigot. vv. 4-11.

(Pharisee, partisan, persecutor.)

Then,—a sincere convert. vv. 12-15.

Afterwards,—a strenuous evangelist. vv. 16-23.

(His missionary call, course, strength, message.)

- (c) His keen intensity. vv. 24-9.

- (d) His clear integrity. vv. 30-2.

Mark how firmly he stands on the ground of Holy Scripture. vv. 6, 7, 8, 22-3, 27.

And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan

- (2) Three different characters.
 (a) Paul, the enthusiastic Christian.
 (b) Festus, the sceptical Roman.
 (c) Agrippa, the politic Jew.

CHAPTER XXVII

We come now to the graphic account of St. Paul's voyage and shipwreck. There is no such detailed record of the working of an ancient ship in the whole of classical literature. St. Luke displays in it his Greek interest in the sea; but, while accurate all through, the description is that of an observant landsman, not the technical record of a trained sailor. The narrative contains, as we might expect, many words which are not used elsewhere in the New Testament.

1-9. FROM CAESAREA TO FAIR HAVENS

1. We] Here the first person plural is resumed, shewing the writer's presence. We last met with it in xxi. 18.

Sail] See xiii. 4, note.

Italy] The country lying at the foot of the Alps, on the west border of the Adriatic Sea, and the fatherland of the Roman empire, having Rome for its capital. It is mentioned again in xviii. 2; Heb. xiii. 24.

Delivered] The Bezan text amplifies this, 'So the governor determined that he should be sent to Caesar, and on the morrow (after the inquiry before Agrippa) he summoned a certain centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius, and delivered to him Paul with the rest of the prisoners.' As the text stands, however, it means that those hitherto responsible for Paul's custody handed him over to Julius.

Certain other prisoners] Who may have been either appellants like the apostle or else condemned criminals on their way to slaughter in the Roman amphitheatre.

2 ^{1 Or, cohort} band. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

A centurion named Julius] See x. 1, note. 'Julius' was a common name among the Romans. He treated Paul with marked courtesy and respect all through. /

The Augustan band] For 'band' or 'cohort', see x. 1. This has been taken to refer to one of the five auxiliary cohorts stationed, according to Josephus, at Caesarea, supposed to have borne the name 'Augustan' as a honorary title, or else so-called as being connected with Caesarea Sebaste (Sebaste being the equivalent of Augusta). This, however, is unlikely for various reasons. Another suggestion, also conjectural, is that Julius may have belonged to the 'cohors Augusta', a select number of Roman knights who formed a body-guard to the emperor, and that he may have been on special temporary duty in Caesarea. Professor Mommsen, however, followed by Ramsay and others, considers that he was one of the 'Frumentarii', or 'Commisariat' centurions who were used also as 'special service' officers, sent hither and thither as messengers on imperial military business. They had a camp on the Caelian Hill at Rome, and were called 'Peregrini' (foreigners), as being recruited from legions on distant service. It would be natural to entrust important prisoners to such a special service officer returning to the capital. Cf. xviii. 16, note. In this case, we must regard the title 'Augustan band' as a popular and colloquial, not a technical one, and consider that St. Luke, following popular usage, employed it to denote such special service officers as, *par excellence*, 'the troops of the emperor'. This seems a probable explanation, though it still requires actual proof.

2. **Embarking]** See xx. 18, note (set foot in).

Adramyttium] A seaport of Mysia (xvi. 7), at the top of the Gulf of Adramyttium, and a little distance east-south-east of Troas. It was an important trading centre and exported ointment, etc. Its vessels were engaged in the coasting trade along the coast of Asia Minor as far as Syria.

And the next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius 3 treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his

To sail] See xxi. 3, note; and also vv. 6, 24 of this chapter, for the same verb.

Unto the places on the coast of Asia] They hoped to find at one or other of the Asian ports a vessel bound direct for Rome, and so embarked, to begin with, in this coasting ship. Even though no such vessel were forthcoming, they could cross from Troas to Philippi and take the great Egnatian Road overland.

Put to sea] See xiii. 13, note. The same verb occurs also in v. 4. It was probably just after the middle of the month of August (cf. v. 9).

Aristarchus a Macedonian, etc.] See xix. 29; xx. 4. We may fairly conclude that he had been close at hand, like St. Luke, ever since St. Paul's last return to Jerusalem. The one was a Jew (Col. iv. 10-11) and the other a Greek; so that East and West were both in attendance on the apostle during this momentous time. Ramsay thinks that they voluntarily travelled as Paul's slaves, arguing that they would not have been allowed to journey with state prisoners otherwise; but we may fairly suppose that they went rather as personal companions, ready to render any assistance in their power, especially since we know so little of the general arrangements of the ship. Bishop Lightfoot thinks that Aristarchus was really homeward bound (to Macedonia), and that he left the party at Myra, rejoining St. Paul at Rome later on.

3. We touched at] The verb is used here, as also in xxviii. 12, in a technical nautical sense. The vessel 'called' at Sidon. The distance was about seventy 'knots' or nautical miles, or about eighty ordinary miles. A sailing vessel of those days could make about seven knots an hour.

Sidon] See xii. 20, note.

Kindly] Our word 'philanthropically'. It is Paulo-Lukan (xxviii. 2; Titus iii. 4), but occurs here only as an adverb.

- 4 ^{1 Gr. receive attention.} friends and ¹ refresh himself. And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of 5 Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and

His friends] So that there were Christians there, as well as at Tyre (xxi. 3-4). Cf. xi. 19; xv. 3. He would, of course, be accompanied by his soldier guard (v. 42).

Refresh himself] Or 'receive attention' (margin). The noun 'attention' or 'care' is found only here, but the cognate verb is used in Luke x. 34-5; 1 Tim. iii. 5, so that the word is Paulo-Lukan. Possibly, the apostle was not well, and needed special care and attention. The parallel in Luke x. 34-5 is interesting. These Sidonian Christians acted the 'good Samaritan' to their friend in his hour of need.

4. **We sailed under the lee of Cyprus]** The verb is peculiar to this narrative (v. 7). They sailed, that is, between Cyprus and the mainland of Asia Minor, under shelter of the island. Since the prevalent wind in the Levant is westerly through the summer months, they could not strike direct across the open sea (to Lycia), as Paul had done in the opposite direction during his last voyage to Jerusalem (xxi. 1-3, notes).

Contrary] That is, westerly. They had, therefore, to depend on currents and land breezes, to proceed from place to place.

5. **Sailed across]** Another nautical verb peculiar to this passage. The meaning is that the vessel sailed slowly along the coast off Cilicia (vi. 9) and Pamphylia (ii. 10; xiii. 13), taking advantage of every breath of land breeze and probably having to anchor every few miles. Some authorities add 'fifteen days' as the time actually consumed in so doing.

Myra] An important seaport of Lycia (see xxi. 1, note). It was the place from which navigation was made direct, when favourable winds allowed, across sea to Alexandria and Syria, and so it grew more and more influential as seafaring methods improved. The Alexandrian corn ships, when unable to face the direct westerly winds, *en route* for Rome, often ran across to

Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy; and he put us therein. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were come with difficulty over against Cnidus, the wind not ¹ further suffering us, we sailed under the lee of Crete, over against

¹ Or, suffering us to get there.

Myra, so as to make use of the shelter of Crete. Otherwise, they had to sail round by Syria and Asia Minor, after the manner of St. Paul's coasting vessel.

Lycia] A country in the south-eastern portion of Asia Minor, rising, in many parts, into lofty mountains almost direct from the sea coast. It was formed into a Roman province (imperial) in A. D. 43.

6. A ship of Alexandria] For 'Alexandria', see vi. 9, note. It was a corn ship (v. 38) carrying wheat to Rome. Italy depended on such vessels for its supply of grain. We gather that it had run straight across the Mediterranean northwards from Alexandria, being unable to sail direct Crete-wards in the teeth of the west wind.

Put us therein] The verb, a compound one, is used only here. It is another of St. Luke's nautical terms, 'embarked us therein.'

7. Sailed slowly] Another (compound) verb peculiar to this passage. The west wind was against them all the way.

Many days] See ix. 23, note.

With difficulty] The repetition of this adverb in this narrative (vv. 8, 16) shews how laborious the sailing was. Cf. xiv. 18, note.

Cnidus] At the extreme south-west corner of Asia Minor, a town situated in Caria at the end of a narrow peninsula. It possessed two good harbours. The island of Cos (xxi. 1) was not far distant. After leaving Cnidus, the vessel would part with the shelter of the Asian coast.

8 Salmone; and with difficulty coasting along it we came unto a certain place called Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 And when much time was spent, and the voyage was

The wind not further suffering us] The marginal reading suggests that the wind did not allow them to put into Cnidus (not suffering us to get there). But the reading of the text is, most likely, correct, and indicates that the northerly wind which blew, at that season, from the Aegean Sea prevented them from running across to Cythera, a small island off the coast (southern) of Greece and north-west of Crete; a more direct course often followed by ships. The verb 'suffer' is peculiar to this verse.

Sailed under the lee of] See v. 4, note. That is, under shelter of the coast of Crete.

Crete] See ii. 11, note.

Over against Salmone] Or, 'Off (Cape) Salmone'. This was a promontory on the north-east of Crete, and vessels sailing under its lee would be sheltered from the north-west wind.

8. Coasting along it] That is, along the southern coast of Crete. Another verb peculiar to this narrative.

Fair Havens] A small bay, still bearing the same name, about six miles east of Cape Matala, a promontory near the middle of the southern coast of Crete, beyond which the land trends to the north.

Lasea] Identified in A.D. 1856 with the ruins of a small town some four miles east of the Bay of Fair Havens, and still called Lasea by the peasants. The town is probably mentioned by name because, while the ship lay at Fair Havens, provisions, etc. were obtained from it.

9-44. THE STORM AND SHIPWRECK

9. Much time] See ix. 23, note. Some interpret 'since the beginning of the voyage'; others, 'while they lay weather-bound at Fair Havens'.

now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, 10 I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but

Voyage] See xxi. 7, note. It occurs again in the next verse also.

Dangerous] Another word peculiar to this narrative. It means that the season considered dangerous to sailing had commenced. This lasted from September 14 till November 11. After the latter date, all navigation on the open sea was suspended till March 5.

The Fast] That is, the great Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 29). This was fixed for the tenth day of the seventh month (Tisri), and fell either in the latter part of September or the beginning of October. In A.D. 59, it occurred on October 5, so that the 'dangerous' season was already well advanced. It would appear that St. Paul and his companions observed the day in some manner on board ship. Otherwise, we may regard it as an autumnal note of time, like our 'Michaelmas' (September 29).

Admonished] Another verb peculiar to this chapter (v. 22). The apostle knew something of sea danger (2 Cor. xi. 25). A council was, apparently, held to consider the situation, and it speaks well for Paul's influence on board that he was one of those specially consulted.

10. I perceive] From observation and experience.

Injury] A Paulo-Lukan word (v. 21; 2 Cor. xiii. 10). It generally denotes 'wanton insult and violence', but is used here of the injury likely to be inflicted by the violence of wind and wave.

Loss] Also Paulo-Lukan (v. 21; Phil. iii. 7-8).

Lading] A word often used by the Greeks of the freight or cargo of a ship, though, elsewhere in the New Testament, it is employed of a 'burden' in general (Matt. xi. 30; xxiii. 4; Luke xi. 46; Gal. vi. 5).

11 also of our lives. But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, and winter there; which is a haven of Crete, looking ¹north-east and

¹ Gr. *down the south-west wind and down the north-west wind.*

Also of our lives] This part of his presentiment was not verified, but providentially averted (vv. 24, 44).

11. The master] Only again in Rev. xviii. 17 (shipmaster). Literally 'pilot', but meaning here 'sailing master', or officer responsible for the navigation, the steering of the vessel, etc.

The owner of the ship] The noun so translated occurs only here. This rendering seems to regard the vessel as a private one, whose owner travelled in her. But, since the provisioning of Rome was in the hands of a department of state, this ship most likely was one of a fleet of corn vessels belonging to the imperial service, and not the property of a private owner. It is better, therefore, to translate 'the captain', the officer, that is, in command of the ship. The centurion, being responsible for the persons of the prisoners, would have to be chiefly considered in forming a decision, and he seems to have presided at the council of consultation. He naturally took the advice of trained sailors.

12. The haven] That is, Fair Havens (v. 8).

Not commodious] A noun peculiar to this verse, and the negative form of the word 'fit' of Luke ix. 62; xiv. 35. It was 'not well fitted' or 'placed' for wintering in.

To winter in] Really a noun 'for wintering in', peculiar to this verse. The cognate verb follows later in the verse and is Paulo-Lukan (xxviii. 11; 1 Cor. xvi. 6; Titus iii. 12). They would have to pass the non-navigation season (November 11—March 5) in some suitable harbour.

south-east. And when the south wind blew softly, 13 supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore.

To put to sea] See xiii. 13, note.

Reach] See xvi. 1, note (come to).

Phœnix] Now called 'Lutro', a place well to the west of Cape Matala, in that part of Crete where the island is narrowest. It has been described as 'the only secure harbour in all winds on the south coast of Crete'.

Looking north-east and south-east] The Greek may be rendered literally 'Looking down the south-west wind and the north-west wind' (margin). The meaning, of course, is that given in the text. The harbour faced the north-east and south-east. This exactly describes the harbour of Lutro which has an easterly aspect. In such a haven, they would be safely sheltered from northerly and westerly winds. The words for the two winds are peculiar to this verse.

13. The south wind] The gentle southerly breeze would favour their westerly progress, and enable them to weather Cape Matala.

Blew softly] Another verb peculiar to this narrative.

Their purpose] To reach Phœnix from Fair Havens.

Weighed anchor] Literally, 'they lifted' (the anchor), the verb being used in a technical nautical sense. It may, however, be also translated, 'they got under sail', 'they set out'.

Sailed along] See v. 8, note.

Close in shore] Another word found only here. Literally, 'nearer', as though 'closer in shore than ever'. It points to the conclusion that they weathered Cape Matala with much difficulty and considerable anxiety, being closer in shore than they liked.

14 But after no long time there beat down from it a tem-
 15 pestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo: and when
 the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we
 16 gave way to it, and were driven. And running under

14. After no long time] That is, 'Not long after rounding the Cape'. Phoenix was about thirty-five miles beyond Cape Matala, and they were now sailing west-north-west across the Gulf of Messara which is some seventeen miles broad.

Beat down from it] That is, from the mountain region of Crete which stands at a height of 7,000 ft. Cf. Luke viii. 23. Lakes and bays in the vicinity of mountains are always liable to such sudden blasts of wind.

A tempestuous wind] Literally, 'a typhonic wind', the adjective being peculiar to this verse. It denotes a heavy, eddying squall. We are familiar in the east with the name and character of typhoons and cyclones.

Euraquilo] Another special word found only here. It is derived from 'Euros', the east wind, and 'Aquila', the north wind, so that it indicates a north-east or east-north-east wind. This suits the circumstances well, and would drive the ship straight towards the African Syrtis (v. 17). Some authorities read 'Euroclydon', which means 'a wind causing broad waves'.

15. Was caught] By the wind, violently; the same verb as in vi. 12; xix. 29 (seized).

Could not face the wind] The verb 'face' occurs only here. Literally, 'look at the wind, eye to eye'. To attempt to do so would have put an unbearable strain on the vessel and led to its foundering. They were probably unable to slacken sail properly at once. The Bezan text, however, says that they 'reefed the sails' then and there.

Gave way to it] That is, to the tempestuous wind.

Were driven] Literally, 'borne along', irresistibly, by the gale.

16. Running under the lee of] Another verb peculiar to this chapter. As sailors would say, they ran before the wind to

the lee of a small island called ¹ Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear,

¹ Many ancient authorities read *Clauda*.

17

Jeeward of Cauda. The description is remarkably accurate, from a nautical point of view.

Cauda] A little island almost due south of Phoenix, and some twenty-three miles away. Its modern name is 'Gozzo'. Many ancient authorities have 'Clauda' (margin). While under the shelter of its coast, they would have a little respite from the violence of the hurricane and would find smoother water to sail in.

We were able] Apparently, St. Luke and others gave the sailors a helping hand.

To secure the boat] More literally, 'To become masters (those who have full command) of the boat', an adjective being used which occurs only here. In other words, they hauled in the boat which had been allowed to tow behind in the light breeze when they left Fair Havens (v. 13). As it had become waterlogged in the rough weather, it was very difficult to haul it in; but to leave it in the sea was to risk its certain loss. The word 'boat' is peculiar to this narrative (vv. 30, 32).

17. Helps] A noun which occurs again only in Heb. iv. 16 (grace for seasonable aid or succour). The 'auxiliary supports', in this case, took the form of strong cables.

Undergirding] A verb found only here. The process in question is called 'frapping' by sailors, stout ropes being passed under the vessel transversely to prevent the timbers from starting apart.

The Syrtis] There were two formidable quicksands of this name, the dread of sailors, Syrtis Major and Syrtis Minor, on the north coast of Africa, the one off the shores of Tripoli, and the other off Tunis more to the west. It is the former, Syrtis Major, which is intended here. The east-north-east wind would

18 and so were driven. And as we laboured exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw *the*

drive them straight on to it, in the direction which they had been following from Crete to Cauda. /

Lowered the gear] The verb 'lower' occurs again in v. 30, and is used also in ix. 25. That translated 'gear' is the same as 'vessel' in x. 11, and is very general in meaning. One explanation of the phrase is that they now lowered the great main-sail, which they had not been able to reef and set before because of the rough weather (v. 15, note). With that still set, the wind would drive them rapidly on to the quicksands. It may, however, include or indicate the lowering of the heavy yard-arm and other gear from aloft, with everything else possible except a small storm-sail necessary to enable them to keep the ship's head to the wind and to alter her tack.

Under such circumstances, sailors would bring the head of vessel as near to the wind as possible and adjust, as above indicated, a small sail to steady her. She would then be driven leeward, and, with a strong east-north-east wind blowing, would drift west by north, the average rate of drift being about a mile and a half per hour.

Were driven] The same verb as in v. 15. They drifted, that is, in a direction a little north of west.

18. Laboured exceedingly with the storm] Both a classical and a nautical phrase. The adverb 'exceedingly' occurs only here. The verb rendered 'to labour with the storm' is allied with the word translated 'to winter' in v. 12, winter being the special season for storms. The cognate noun occurs in v. 20 (tempest). The ship's company were greatly distressed by bad weather.

Began to throw (the freight) overboard] Literally, 'They began to do (or, continued doing) a throwing out'. The phrase is a technical one, it would seem, for throwing away cargo. The noun 'throwing out' occurs only here. The reason for this action was that the force of the waves and constant stress of the storm had caused leakage and there was danger of foundering.

freight overboard; and the third day they cast out 19 with their own hands the ¹tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars shone ^{1 Or, furniture.} 20 upon *us* for many days, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. And when they had been long without food, 21 then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and

19. They cast out] A graphic word, 'they flung out'. Some authorities have 'we flung out', giving St. Luke a share in the work.

With their own hands] Another word (a compound one) peculiar to this unique narrative.

The tackling] Also a word found only here. It is cognate with the one rendered 'gear' in v. 17. It may include the ship's furniture, tackling, and fittings, every heavy thing which could possibly be dispensed with.

20. Shone upon us] A Paulo-Lukan verb (Luke i. 79; Titus ii. 11; iii. 4). There was no mariner's compass in those days, and they were entirely dependent, in sailing, on celestial observations. Even in these days of scientific navigation, observations for latitude require a constant sight of the heavenly bodies.

Was now taken away] Imperfect tense, 'Was now gradually taken away' (or, stripped off from us). The same verb occurs again only in v. 40; 2 Cor. iii. 16; Heb. x. 11. Hope is regarded as a robe, so to speak, which was slowly but surely stripped off from them.

21. Without food] One word, a noun, in the Greek, found only here. When a tempest is raging, it is exceedingly difficult to prepare food, and well-nigh impossible to arrange regular meals. Every one would be busy working the pumps, etc., and anxiety and panic would be paramount.

22 loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but *only* of
 23 the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel

Paul stood forth in the midst of them] The right man for a great emergency. His faith and calmness in danger at once made him the leader and counsellor of all.

Harkened unto] Or 'obeyed'; the same verb as in ch. v. 29, 32.

Set sail] See xiii. 13, note.

Gotten] Literally, 'gained'. All they had gained was loss! We may, however, interpret 'You ought not to have set sail from Crete, and you ought (by staying there) to have been spared this injury and loss'. For 'injury and loss', see v. 10, note.

22. I exhort] See v. 9, note (admonish). St. Paul has new counsel to give now, counsel of cheer and hope.

Be of good cheer] See xxiv. 10, note (cheerfully). The apostle is like a bird singing sweetly in the storm.

Loss] A Paulo-Lukan noun, found again only in Rom. xi. 15, and quite different from the one so translated in vv. 10, 22. It means literally, 'a throwing away'. A special revelation had dissipated the apostle's former fears (v. 10).

23. Stood by me] See xii. 7, note; and cf. xxiii. 11.

An angel] See ch. v. 19, note.

The God] That is, 'the true God'. Paul's words were a confession of faith among the heathen on board, as well as a message of comfort. He professes himself the bond-servant and worshipper of the true and living God.

I serve] 'And worship'. See xxiv. 14, note. He uses it again also in the first person singular in Rom. i. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3.

of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, **24** Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, **25** that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. **26**

But when the fourteenth night was come, as we **27** were driven to and fro in the *sea of Adria*, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near

24. Fear not] Cf. xviii. 9. An expression frequent in the New Testament, and worth tracing out in the passages in which it occurs.

Thou must stand before Cæsar] Cf. xxiii. 11. God's definite purpose in it all was Paul's witness and ministry in Rome.

Hath granted] As a favour, grace, and boon. Cf. the use of the same verb in xxv. 11. The apostle was a very 'life-preserver' on board that ship. Apparently, he had been praying that the lives of all might be spared, and this revelation was the gracious answer to his intercessions.

25. Be of good cheer] Repeated, in comfortable reiteration, from v. 22.

I believe God] A grand confession of faith, sounding clearly above the noise of the storm. The definite article may perhaps be emphatic here, 'I believe my God, the God who has thus vouchsafed His promise'.

26. We must be cast, etc.] A clear prediction of coming events.

27. The fourteenth night] Since their leaving Fair Havens. A ship drifting for thirteen days at the average rate of one and a half miles an hour would cover a distance of 468 miles; and they had drifted for rather more than thirteen days from Cauda. The distance between Cauda and Malta is a little less than 480 miles, and the latter lies exactly in the direction of their calculated drift, viz. a little north of west (v. 17, note).

28 to some country ; and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms : and after a little space, they sounded again,

Driven to and fro] Better, 'driven across'. Their drift would be, for the most part, uniformly in one direction.

The (sea of) Adria] Not the Adriatic Sea, as we now know it, namely, the Gulf of Venice. In the popular usage of St. Luke's days, the term was applied to that part of the Mediterranean which lies between Malta, Italy, Greece, and Crete. Strabo and Ptolemy both testify to this wider extension of the term ; and, later, it came to be even more extensively applied to the whole eastern part of the Mediterranean.

Surmised] See xiii. 25 (suppose). The imperfect tense may signify that their impression was formed gradually. Their practised senses detected the propinquity of land, probably from the sound of breakers rolling upon rocks.

They were drawing near to some country] Literally, 'Some land was nearing them', just as it would be expressed in nautical language by those on board. The ancient Vatican MS. reads 'that some land was resounding' (with the roar of the breakers).

28. They sounded] Warned by the approach of land. The verb is a technical one peculiar to this verse, and means 'to heave (or, let down) the sounding-lead'. This is always done when there is a fear of getting into too shallow water. We may see the operation on any coasting steamer which plies from port to port in India.

Twenty fathoms] The word 'fathom' occurs only here. It is equivalent, etymologically, to the extreme breadth of the body and outstretched arms, and represents, approximately, six feet.

After a little space] This expression really represents the participle of a Lukan verb (Luke xxii. 59 ; xxiv. 51).

Fifteen fathoms] It is a remarkable fact that, in the case of a ship drifting from Cauda to St. Paul's Bay in Malta (the supposed scene of the shipwreck), it would pass near the

and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing lest haply 29
 we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let
 go four anchors from the stern, and ¹ wished
 for the day. And as the sailors were seeking ^{1 Or, prayed} 30
 to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into
 the sea, under colour as though they would lay out

rocky point of Koura at the east corner of that Bay, after which the charts shew soundings of twenty and fifteen fathoms in succession, exactly as here described. It must have been the breakers on Koura which the sailors heard.

29. Four anchors] To make the hold the more secure. The word 'anchor' only occurs, outside this narrative (vv. 30, 40), in Heb. vi. 19.

From the stern] See v. 41; Mark iv. 38. An unusual proceeding, but the best possible under the circumstances, as the prow was thus held landwards, ready for the vessel to be run ashore. Had they cast anchors from the bow, the wind would probably have swung round the ship's head away from the land and made operations difficult the next day. The hold for anchors in St. Paul's Bay is excellent.

Wished] Or, 'prayed' (margin) that day might come on. The imperfect tense shews that the longing or praying was continuous. It was a night of intense anxiety.

30. Seeking to flee] Planning, that is, a way of escape for themselves, to try and secure at least their own safety.

Had lowered the boat] For the verb, see v. 17; and for the noun, v. 16. They intended to take their chance of reaching the shore in it, leaving the ship's passengers to their fate. In this, they were most un-sailor-like.

Lay out anchors] That is, at full cable's length. This would appear to be more effectual than just dropping them from the bow; and, for this operation, they would have to carry the anchors some distance in the boat before lowering them into the water. A boat is often lowered in a similar manner, in our own days, for anchoring or 'tying up' a ship in harbours.

31 anchors from the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, **32** ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut away the **33** ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing.

From the foreship] Another word peculiar to this narrative (v. 41). The pretence was plausible. It would render the position more secure to anchor fore as well as aft.

31. The centurion] Julius (vv. 1, 11), as chief of the company concerned.

The soldiers] The military guard under Julius. They are here mentioned for the first time (vv. 32, 42).

Ye] Emphatic. He appeals to their sense of self-preservation. The sailors were needed to handle the vessel on the morrow, or disaster might ensue.

32. Cut away] Probably, with the short swords they wore. They shewed their confidence in, and obedience to, the apostle by sacrificing the boat. We may suppose either that the sailors were just in the act of lowering the boat, or that they had already lowered it and were about to descend into it. This prompt action frustrated their design.

The ropse] Which fastened the boat to the ship, if it had been actually lowered; or, otherwise, those by which it was being let down into the water.

Fall off] Or, 'fall away'. The translation will depend on whether we regard the boat as having been already lowered or as being just then in process of being lowered. It was probably soon dashed to pieces on the rocks, and the sailors might all have perished with it but for St. Paul's intervention.

33. Besought] Repeatedly (imperfect tense).

To take some food] The same phrase as in ii. 46. • It occurs again in v. 34.

Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this **34** is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. And when he had said **35** this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all: and he brake it, and began to eat.

The fourteenth day] Since the storm began. See v. 27.

Ye wait] As though 'for relief and deliverance'. It tells of prolonged suspense and disappointed hope.

Continue fasting] Or, 'continue foodless'. Both words are peculiar to this verse, but 'foodless' is cognate with the noun 'without food' of v. 21.

Having taken nothing] That is, 'having had no proper meal'. The language is, of course, relative.

34. Safety] See iv. 9, note (made whole), where the corresponding verb occurs. The noun usually signifies spiritual 'salvation' in the New Testament (e.g. iv. 12), but is used here and in Heb. xi. 7 of physical safety, its regular meaning in classical Greek. Similarly, in India, words like 'rakshá', 'rakshanyam' have passed, in Christian usage, from the idea of physical protection to that of the salvation of the soul.

There shall not a hair perish] A Jewish proverbial expression, denoting complete immunity from harm (cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 45; 2 Sam. xiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 52; Luke xxi. 18).

35. Gave thanks to God] The Jewish head of a household was wont to give thanks thus before a meal, and the custom has passed into Christianity as 'grace before meals'. It is sanctified to us by the Saviour's own example (Matt. xv. 36; Luke xxii. 17, 19), and is a fitting acknowledgement of our gratitude to God for His good gifts.

In the presence of all] A public act of worship and praise. St. Paul was a true witness to his God on board that vessel.

Brake it, and began to eat] As an example to the rest. The Bezan text adds 'and gave also unto us'; but this sounds like a later addition made to give the incident an Eucharistic complexion.

- 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also
 37 ¹ took food. And we were in all in the ship
¹ two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.
 38 ¹ And when they had eaten enough, they
¹ lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat
 39 into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not
 the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a
 beach, and they took counsel whether they could

36. Of good cheer] An adjective found only here, but corresponding with the verb used in vv. 22, 25. Paul's cheerfulness proved to be infectious.

All] Notice the reiteration of this word (vv. 33, 35, 37, 44).

Took food] See v. 33, and reference there.

37. Two hundred threescore and sixteen souls] Perhaps they were specially counted when the rations were distributed to them, in view of future contingencies. The Vatican MS. has 'about threescore and sixteen souls' (see margin); but the larger number is most probably correct. Josephus, in narrating his own voyage to Italy, says that there were six hundred people on board his ship.

38. Had eaten enough] 'Eaten to the full', a Paulo-Lukan verb (1 Cor. iv. 8). Cheerful spirits led to a hearty repast.

Lightened] Another verb peculiar to this narrative. The imperfect tense suggests that the process was a protracted one.

The wheat] With which the corn ship was chiefly laden (v. 6, note). The 'freight' of v. 18 may refer to the deck-cargo as distinguished from that down in the hold, or to some other cargo over and above the corn. They saved the wheat as long as they could, but now had to abandon that also in order to save their own lives.

39. Knew not the land] That is, 'They did not recognize the land'. The imperfect tense seems to signify that they tried again and again to identify it, but failed. Though the sailors

¹ drive the ship upon it. And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they

1 Some ancient authorities read *bring the ship safe to shore.* 40

may have been to Malta before, they were accustomed to put into the harbour of Valetta, which is some distance south-east along the same coast. The outline of St. Paul's Bay would be new to them.

Perceived] And kept their eyes fixed on it (imperfect tense).

Bay] Doubtless what is known now as 'St. Paul's Bay'. All the description suits it.

A beach] See xxi. 5, note. A sandy or shingly beach, suitable for effecting a landing. St. Paul's Bay answers to this, though the former sandy beach has been largely obliterated by the action of the sea.

Took counsel] Carefully and with considerable deliberation (imperfect).

Drive the ship upon it] For the same verb, see vii. 45 (thrust out). It is used here in a technical sense, of thrusting a ship from the open sea on to the land. The object, of course, was to save the lives of those on board. Some ancient authorities, with a slight change of orthography, read 'Bring the ship safe to shore' (margin), which modifies the meaning and suggests an effort to save the vessel too.

40. Casting off] See v. 20, note (taken away). They loosed the cables which attached the anchors to the ship, and let them fall into the sea. Thus the anchors were 'left in the sea' where they had gripped the bottom, being no longer required.

Loosing the bands of the rudders] The word 'bands' occurs only here; and the word 'rudder' only again in Jas. iii. 4. Ancient ships had two paddle-rudders, one on either side. These had been hauled in and lashed up while the vessel lay anchored. They were now unloosed and adjusted in their proper places again, being required to steer the ship straight for the shore.

41 made for the beach. But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmoveable, but the stern began to break up by the violence of *the waves*.

Hoisting up the foresail] The word 'foresail' occurs only here. This would not only assist the steering, but would also press the vessel landwards, as the wind filled it.

The wind] Literally, 'The blowing (breeze)'. This, filling the sail, would materially assist their object.

Made for the beach] The objective they had in view in this operation (v. 39). The verb is one used technically for 'bringing a ship to land', steering direct for the shore.

41. Lighting upon] A verb found elsewhere only in Luke x. 30; Jas. i. 2. It is used here in a technical nautical sense. They met with unexpected conditions as the vessel moved coastward.

Where two seas met] An adjective in the Greek, peculiar to this verse. Just off the promontory forming the western extremity of St. Paul's Bay is a small island called Salmonetta. From their former position at anchor, this looked like a continuation of the mainland. As they approached it, however, they found that there was a channel between coast and island, and this channel is understood by many to be the 'place where two seas met', since it has a sea, so to speak, on either side of it. The current there, meeting the tide, raises sandbanks, and on one of these sandbanks the vessel stuck, it is supposed. It seems better, however, to regard the isthmus-like narrow neck of land at the end of the promontory as the 'place where two seas met'. This presented them with a suitable place to 'ground' on, as soon as they discovered it. It was 'a ridge between two seas'. Once 'grounded' there, they would have time to escape before the vessel became a complete wreck.

Ran the vessel aground] Purposely, as it was an advantageous position for them under the circumstances. The verb is a technical one, occurring only here. A new word is introduced here

And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest 42 any of *them* should swim out, and escape. But the 43 centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could

for 'vessel', also peculiar to this verse, perhaps to signify that what had been a sailing vessel was now a stranded hulk.

The foreship] As in v. 30.

Struck] Another verb peculiar to this narrative. It conveys also the sense of 'sticking fast'.

Remained unmoveable] An adjective found again only in Heb. xii. 28. The bottom of St. Paul's Bay has been described as 'mud, graduating into tenacious clay'. It has been calculated that the ship probably drew eighteen feet of water or so. On approaching the neck of land, it would ground, from insufficiency of water, in this clayey mud, its prow getting fixed into it.

The stern] As in v. 29.

Began to break up] Or 'gradually broke up' (imperfect). It would be exposed to the breakers and billows, which continued dashing upon it till they had shattered it to pieces. This, however, would take time.

The violence] The same noun as in ch. v. 26; xxi. 35; xxiv. 7. The shock of the sea, in such a position, would be tremendous.

42. Counsel] See ii. 23, note.

Kill the prisoners] As they were responsible in case any of them escaped (xii. 19).

Swim out] Another of the verbs peculiar to this narrative. 'Swim out and away'.

Escape] Also peculiar to this verse, 'Completely escape'.

43. Desiring to save Paul] Julius had treated him, from the first, with marked respect, and was now under special obligations to him as, practically, the saviour of the whole company

swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first **44** to the land: and the rest, some on planks, and some on *other* things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

(vv. 22-4; 30-2; 33-6). On this account, now, all the prisoners were spared.

Purpose] A form only found again in Rom. ix. 19; 1 Pet. iv. 3, and comprehending both desire and purpose. It is cognate with the verb 'desiring'.

Swim] Another verb found only in this narrative. The same remark applies to the compound verb 'cast (themselves) overboard'. By going 'first to land' they could render aid to the non-swimmers when they arrived within reach there.

44. Planks] The last of the words peculiar to this chapter. They were probably planks and boards used in the ship for various purposes.

(Other) things from the ship] Spars and fragments of the breaking vessel.

Escaped safe] A compound verb used in the Acts again in **xxiii.** 24; **xxvii.** 43 (save); **xxviii.** 1, 4. It marks their complete safety. Thus God's prediction-promise was fulfilled (v. 24).

TEACHING OF CHAPTER XXVII

I. *Principal divisions.*

(1) The first stage. From Caesarea to Myra. vv. 1-5.

(2) The second stage. From Myra to Fair Havens. vv. 6-12.

(3) The third stage. From Fair Havens to Malta. vv. 13-44.

Otherwise. (a) The start. vv. 1-7.

(b) The stoppage. vv. 8-12. (At Fair Havens).

(c) The storm. vv. 13-44.

II. *Prominent topics.*

(1) St. Paul in the ship.

(a) Wise in counsel. vv. 9-13.

(b) Calm in danger. vv. 14-26.

And when we were escaped, then we knew that the 1

(c) Firm in action. vv. 27-38.

(d) Strong in influence. vv. 39-44.

The counsellor. (vv. 9, 10);

The comforter. (vv. 21-6);

The director. (vv. 30-2);

The encourager. (vv. 33-6);

The preserver. (vv. 42-4);

of others.

Notice his—Courteous:manner. (vv. 10, 21. Sirs, gentlemen).

Courageous confession of faith. (vv. 23-5).

Contagious cheerfulness. (vv. 34-6).

Pious example. (v. 35).

(2) God's goodness to His servant.

(a) Surrounds him with kindness. vv. 2-3, 43.

(b) Refreshes him by the way. v. 3.

(c) Endues him with foresight. vv. 9-10.

(d) Cheers him in danger. vv. 22-6.

(e) Preserves him from harm. vv. 30-2; 43-4.

(f) Blesses his influence. vv. 33-7.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1-10. PAUL AT MALTA. PUBLIUS

1. Escaped] The same verb as in xxvii. 44.

We knew] The tense is not imperfect, as in xxvii. 39, but aorist. They found out now at once what island it was. Either they recognized it by known land-marks, or the natives gave them the information immediately.

Melita] The modern Malta. It is about sixty miles south of the nearest point of Sicily, and is seventeen miles long with a maximum breadth of nine miles. Since A.D. 1800, it has formed part of the British empire. In St. Paul's days, it was included in the Roman province of Sicily. The marginal reading 'Melitine' is that of the Vatican MS. and of some ancient versions.

- 2 ^{1 Some ancient authorities read *Melitene*.} island was called ¹ Melita. And the barbarians shewed us no common kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.
- 3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and ^{2 Or, from the heat.} laid them on the fire, a viper came out ² by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

2. The barbarians] The name given by the Greeks to those who did not share their own birth and language (Introd. IV. 9). St. Luke, as a Greek, naturally uses the term of a population which was originally Phoenician, though it had a considerable admixture of blood from other races, since the island had passed successively under both Grecian and Roman rule. The word is Paulo-Lukan (Rom. i. 14; 1 Cor. xiv. 11; Col. iii. 11).

Kindness] Our word 'philanthropy'. It is Paulo-Lukan in usage (Titus iii. 4), and corresponds with the adverb used in xxvii. 3.

Kindled a fire] Cf. Luke xxii. 55. Their kindness was practical (Jas. ii. 15-16).

Received us all] 'Welcomed us all to close and friendly association.' Cf. xviii. 26, for a similar use of the same verb.

The present rain] The participle rendered 'present' represents a Paulo-Lukan verb of frequent occurrence. Apparently, they landed in very heavy rain, to add to their discomforts.

The cold] A noun found elsewhere only in John xviii. 18; 2 Cor. xi. 27. The latter of these two references shews that St. Paul had suffered in a similar way in former days. It was now the middle of November, and the cold would be severe in that climate, especially as they were wet and dripping.)

3. But when Paul] Characteristically diligent and energetic (xx. 34). All through his history, he sets us a splendid example of application to work, both spiritual and manual.

Had gathered] This verb occurs only here and in the margin of Matt. xvii. 22.

And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging from 4 his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from

Sticks] Or 'brushwood', such as the furze, etc., which is still to be found near St. Paul's Bay. The word is used only here.

A viper] Cf. Matt. iii. 7; xii. 34; xxiii. 33; Luke iii. 7. The name of a special class of poisonous snakes. In India, we have many kinds of viper, the 'Russell's viper' being particularly notorious for its deadly poison.

By reason of the heat] Or, 'from the heat' (margin). It had been numbed by the cold, and was roused to activity by the sudden heat of the fire. The word 'heat' occurs only here, and is one used specially by physicians.

Fastened on his hand] The verb is peculiar to this verse. It was employed technically by Greek physicians, being used by Dioscorides, in particular, of poisonous matter invading the body. We are, therefore, to understand that the viper actually bit the apostle and infused its poison into his hand. We are only too familiar in this country with the nature and deadly effects of snake poisoning.

4. The beast] The very word (*θηρίον*) used, in technical medical language, of such a reptile. It gave its name, also, to a special remedy in vogue for snake bites made from the flesh of vipers (*θηριακή*).

Hanging from] It had gripped on to his hand and hung suspended.

They said] The word passed from mouth to mouth (imperfect tense). So also in v. 6.

No doubt] A Paulo-Lukan adverb of strong affirmation (Luke iv. 23; Acts xxi. 22; Rom. iii. 9; 1 Cor. v. 10; ix. 10, 22; xvi. 12).

Escaped] The same verb as in xxvii. 44 and xxviii. 1.

5 the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. Howbeit he shook off the beast into the fire, and took no harm.
 6 But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation, and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

Justice] The Greeks worshipped 'Justice', personified as a goddess (Dikee), reputed the daughter of Zeus and Themis. The Maltese may either have adopted her or have had a corresponding deity of their own. In Indian language, the Hindus would say 'Vidhi (Fate) suffered him not to live'.

5. Shook off] A Lukan verb (Luke ix. 5). The apostle's calmness is again conspicuous. We know, from experience, what commotion and consternation are usually caused by a snake bite.

Took no harm] Or, 'suffered no harm' (cf. Luke x. 19; Mark xvi. 18).

6. Expected] See iii. 5, note.

Would have swollen] A verb peculiar to this verse, and one used technically in medical phraseology, for 'swelling' (from inflammation).

Fallen down] See xxvi. 14, note.

Suddenly] See ii. 2, note.

Nothing amiss] See xxv. 5, note. The word 'amiss', as here used, has a medical tone about it, being employed by physicians of something abnormal or fatal.

Changed their minds] A verb peculiar to this verse. They turned right round in their opinion (cf. xiv. 11, 19).

That he was a god] To pagan minds, such a miracle immediately suggested the apostle's divinity (xiv. 11-12). Some of the Greek myths, with which the Maltese must have been familiar, represent certain gods as having special power over serpents. In India, we shall remember that Siva is represented as

Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands ⁷ belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius; who received us, and entertained us three days

wearing a snake round his neck and others about his person, and that Vishnu is figured as sleeping on a serpent.

7. The chief man of the island] Literally, 'The First (man) of the island'. The title 'First of the Maltese' is technically correct, as evidence from inscriptions shews. It may possibly represent a title which the Romans found attached to the principal person of Malta and which they adopted as the official name for their local governor, who would be the deputy of the *propraetor* of Sicily. Otherwise, it must be regarded as denoting the honorary rank of a native magnate, who was allowed, under Roman rule, to retain his former title and, possibly, some of his former possessions and authority. We have instances of the continuance of such titles and honours under British rule in India.

Publius] A Roman 'praenomen', corresponding not to our surname but rather to our personal (Christian) name. It would appear, therefore, that the people of the neighbourhood spoke of him familiarly thus, just as great statesmen, etc., among us are popularly spoken of by their Christian names, and that St. Luke heard it so used and adopted it. Ramsay suggests, however, that the Greek form 'Poplios' may represent the Latin 'Popilius' which was a 'nomen' or family name. In this case, there is no difficulty.

Received us] A compound verb found again only in Heb. xi. 17. It may refer to the whole company of shipwrecked folk; or, as some think, only to the Roman soldiers and their prisoners, for whom Publius, as a Roman subject (if not governor) would feel a special responsibility. Others, again, would confine the special hospitality to Paul and his friends (v. 10).

Courteously] A word found only here. It speaks both of affability and of generosity.

8 courteously. And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him 9 healed him. And when this was done, the rest also which had diseases in the island came, and were cured: 10 who also honoured us with many honours; and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed.

8. Lay sick of] Literally, 'was lying held with (fever, etc.)'. The latter verb has a distinct medical ring about it (held with), being technically used in this sense by Greek physicians; cf. Luke iv. 38.

Fever] The Greek noun is in the plural (fevers) and marks a definite medical usage. The other (non-medical) writers of the New Testament use it uniformly in the singular.

Dysentery] Our own English word being transliterated from the Greek. It occurs only here in the New Testament. It is, of course, a distinctly medical term, and is used by Greek physicians, as here, in conjunction with fever, to express the symptoms of a disease with which most of us are familiar enough in the tropics.

Entered in and prayed] See ix. 39, 40; cf. Jas. v. 16.

Laying his hands on him] See vi. 6, note.

9. Came and were cured] The imperfect tenses point to the frequency of the cases dealt with. Some think that the plural 'us' of v. 10 indicates that St. Luke rendered assistance.

10. With many honours] Gratitude, marks of respect, and gifts.

Sailed] See xiii. 13, note.

Such things as we needed] We must remember that they had lost everything in the shipwreck, and so needed a new outfit, etc.

And after three months we set sail in a ship of 11 Alexandria, which had wintered in the island, whose

11-15. JOURNEY FROM MALTA TO ROME

11. After three months] If they were shipwrecked, as we suppose, about the middle of November, the three months, if taken exactly, would expire about the middle of February. This was earlier than the usual time for the re-opening of navigation (March 5); but the weather may have set in fine and induced them to proceed. Or the 'three months' may be a round number, and the start may have been made at the beginning of March.

Set sail] See xiii. 13, note. The wind must have been southerly to enable them to sail across to Sicily.

A ship of Alexandria] Most likely a corn ship like the one which had been lost (xxvii. 6), and one belonging to the imperial fleet. The same gale which had overtaken them had driven this vessel, in all probability, into winter-quarters.

Wintered] See xxvii. 12, note. At the usual seaport of Valetta.

Sign] A noun peculiar to this verse. It denotes the sculptured or painted figures at the prow, customary in ships of those days. They often represented deities, as well as marks to distinguish the vessel.

The Twin Brothers] Greek 'Dioscuri' (margin), of which the Latin 'Gemini' is the equivalent. Castor and Pollux were the mythical sons of Jupiter by Leda (wife of Tyndarus, king of Sparta). They are supposed to have cleared the Hellespont and the adjacent seas of pirates, and so were deemed the protectors of navigation. During a violent storm, flames of fire are said to have been seen playing round their heads, whereupon the tempest ceased. The pale, blue lights which are sometimes seen by sailors at the mast head during thundery weather were regarded as connected with their presence and help. They were thus considered the tutelary deities of sailors, who were accustomed to pray and make vows to them for safety.

- 12 ^{1 Gr. *Dioscuri*} sign was ¹ The Twin Brothers. And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.
 13 ^{2 Some ancient authorities read *cast loose*.} And from thence we ² made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came

They are supposed to have been translated to the sky and were identified with the stars of the same name. Castor and Pollux are the twin stars of the constellation 'Gemini', known in this country by its Sanskrit name 'Mithuna' (i.e. 'Pair').

12. Touching at] See xxvii. 3, note.

Syracuse] The chief town of Sicily, just above its south-eastern corner. It was the capital of the eastern half of the island, and had formerly been the seat of a famous Greek colony. The run from Malta was only about a hundred miles, so that they probably arrived there the day after embarkation.

Three days] Most likely, they were becalmed at Syracuse, the favouring breeze having dropped. *i*

13. Made a circuit] Their course lay northward, up the Straits of Messina; but, as the wind was not favourable, they had to 'tack' repeatedly and to 'beat about' in an indirect way, making slow and difficult progress. The marginal reading 'cast loose' (the same verb as in xxvii. 40) is contained in some of the oldest MSS. but is open to question.

Arrived at] See xvi. 1, note.

Rhegium] The modern Reggio, a town near the south-western extremity of Italy, and opposite to the Sicilian Messina, at the narrowest part of the Straits. It was famous, in the days of ancient navigation, as having the rock of Scylla near it and the whirlpool of Carybdis opposite to it. Sailors were wont to make or pay vows to Castor and Pollux (v. 11) who were specially worshipped there. A famous Greek colony had formerly flourished there. The distance from Syracuse is about eighty miles (direct). Reggio and Messina have lately (A.D. 1909) been devastated by a terrible earthquake, and so are names familiar to us all.

to Puteoli: where we found brethren, and were in-14 treated to tarry with them seven days: and so we

After one day] During which they waited at Rhegium.

A south wind sprang up] Cf. xxvii. 13. This was exactly the wind they required. The verb 'sprang up' is peculiar to this verse.

On the second day] A special form occurring only here. The distance from Rhegium to Puteoli is about 182 miles, so that, given an average rate of seven miles an hour, the run would occupy about twenty-six hours.

Puteoli] The modern 'Pozzuoli', in the Bay of Naples. It was the chief port of Rome, one hundred and forty miles distant from the great city to the south-east,—though Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, served that purpose to a more limited extent. Puteoli was the great commercial centre of Italy and the emporium for the extensive trade which was carried on with the east,—a sort of Colombo, so to speak, to the western world. There the corn ships of Egypt landed their welcome freight and were awaited, as Seneca has told us, with the keenest possible expectation. A considerable Jewish population had gathered there, attracted by commerce.

14. We found brethren] That is, Christians. Though we know nothing of the first formation of a church at Puteoli, it is not surprising to find one in a city which was one of the great centres in the main highway of commerce, and where Jews were numerous; especially as we know that there were already a large number of Christians in Rome.

Were intreated to tarry with them seven days] The Bezan text reads 'Were comforted, tarrying with them seven days', and this sounds more correct, since Paul was a prisoner and could scarcely do as he wished, though the centurion would, doubtless, shew him all the consideration in his power. It has been suggested that Julius had to report his arrival to the authorities at the capital and to await instructions. However this may be, the apostle enjoyed a week of rest and comfort, including a Sunday, with brethren in Christ, and this must have been a great cheer to him.

15 came to Rome. And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius, and The Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

Came to Rome] The capital of Italy, and the then mistress of the world. It was situated on the river Tiber, fifteen miles from the sea, and was built on seven hills, its first foundation being assigned to the tribe of the Latins in 753 B.C. It contained, at this period, a population of about one and a half millions, and was rich in handsome buildings, the great Colosseum (amphitheatre) being stupendous. It was surrounded with massive walls and had several large entrance gates, from which Roman roads branched out as the arteries of communication with the wide world beyond. We may compare, to some extent, the old walls and gates of an Indian city like Delhi. The imperial palace was built on the Palatine Hill. Ramsay thinks that the 'Rome' of this verse refers to the 'city-state' of that name, viz. the whole area of territory attached as a state to the city and known as the 'ager Romanus' (just as one speaks of the Delhi district); while the 'Rome' of v. 16 refers to the actual walled city only; and hence the double arrival mentioned. Otherwise, we shall have to regard vv. 15, 16 as an amplification in detail of the event summarized in v. 14.

15. The brethren] That is, Christians from Rome. The Epistle to the Romans, written about three years previously, shews how numerous a body of them already existed at the metropolis, and enumerates the names of many of them (Rom. xvi. 3-15). The origin of the church there may probably be traced back to the day of Pentecost (ii. 10).

When they heard of us] The seven days' halt at Puteoli gave ample time for communication with friends at Rome.

Came to meet us] Literally, 'came for a meeting with us', a noun 'meeting' being used which is found again only in Matt. xxv. 1, 6; 1 Thess. iv. 17,—interesting references.

The Market of Appius] The Greek is a transliteration of the Latin name 'Appii Forum'. It was forty-three miles distant

And when we entered into Rome, ¹ Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

16
Some ancient authorities insert *the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the praetorian guard: but.*

from Rome, on the great Appian Road which ran from the capital to Brundisium (Brindisi). A branch road from Puteoli joined it at Capua, from which town St. Paul and his companions traversed 'the queen of roads', as it has been called. 'Appii Forum' probably derived its name from Appius Claudius the censor (313--310 B. C.), who constructed a great part of the road in question. It was a place where travellers changed horses, etc.

The Three Taverns] The Greek is again a transliteration of the Latin name, 'Tres Tabernae'. It was ten miles nearer Rome than Appii Forum, situated at a spot where a branch road went off to Antium and the sea coast. The word 'tavern' would apply, in Latin usage, to shops and wooden constructions of all kinds, and so probably denotes an inn or resting-place for travellers. We might say, in Indian phraseology, 'the Three Sattras' (Choultries), or 'Tín Musáfir-Khána'.

He thanked God] For this cheer by the way; cf. xxvii. 35.

Took courage] This noun, 'courage' is found only here, but is cognate with the verb used in xxiii. 11 (be of good cheer) and seems to take us back to the Lord's message as there given. This double meeting with Christian brethren may well have confirmed him in the belief that he was actually treading the pathway of his Master's will and purpose, as revealed so clearly to him in the fortress of Antonia. 'He saw that Christ was at Rome also' (Bengel). It would seem that he had become somewhat dejected, perhaps from anxiety as to the nature of the reception awaiting him in Rome. The coming of fellow-Christians to meet him, however, acted as a cordial to his drooping spirits, and he took courage and cheer (cf. Rom. i. 11-12).

16-31. PAUL IN ROME. SPEECH TO THE JEWS

16. Entered into Rome] See v. 14, note. Here, at least, entrance into the city itself is intended. The entrance would be made

- 17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together ¹ those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into

through the Capuan Gate. The Bezan text and some other authorities read, after 'Rome', the words 'The centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the camp (the Stratopedarch), but Paul, etc.' (see margin). The 'Stratopedarch' is usually identified (as in the margin) with the captain of the Praetorian Guard, who, at the time, was Burrus, a kindly and virtuous man. Mommsen and Ramsay, however, followed by others, regard this 'Stratopedarch' as the chief of the camp of 'Peregrini' (foreigners) on the Caelian Hill (see xxvii. 1, note). If Julius were one of the 'Frumentarii' or special service centurions, he would naturally hand over his charge to his superior officer.

To abide by himself] Probably on account of Julius's special recommendation, after the great services which the apostle had rendered.

The soldier that guarded him] Bound to his prisoner by a chain. Soldiers would, of course, be told off in turn for this special duty, and thus the Gospel message was spread (Phil. i. 13). St. Paul was allowed as much liberty as possible, but was a prisoner none the less, 'an ambassador in a chain' (Eph. vi. 20). The Bezan text inserts, before 'the soldier', the words 'outside the camp', thus emphasizing the special privilege extended to him.

17. After three days] See xxv. 1. Paul was not inferior to Festus in energy, diligence, and zeal.

The chief of the Jews] Cf. xxv. 2. Representatives of the large and influential body of Jews in Rome. They had no less than seven synagogues there. Some prefer the marginal reading (cf. Rom. i. 16), though it seems less probable here.

the hands of the Romans: who, when they had 18 examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the 19 Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore did I ¹intreat you to see and to speak with me: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound

¹ Or, call for you, to see and to speak with you

1] Emphatic. 'I, who have summoned you, and whom you see as a prisoner.'

The people] That is, the Jewish people (x. 2, note).

Customs, etc.] For 'customs', see vi. 14, note; and, for 'of our fathers', see xxii. 3; xxiv. 14.

Was delivered prisoner] For the assault in the temple (xxi. 30-4) and the events which ensued issued in his becoming a Roman prisoner.

18. Examined] See iv. 9, note.

Desired to set me at liberty] The imperfect tense suggests, perhaps, a sustained attitude of willingness to release him (cf. xxiv. 26; xxv. 25-6; xxvi. 31-2).

19. Spake against it] Cf. xiii. 45 (contradict). More, probably, passed before Festus than appears in the brief account of xxv. 6-9.

Was constrained to appeal,] See xxv. 11. He had, clearly, taken that step as a last resource, with the greatest possible reluctance.

Not that, etc.] He hastens to explain that, in his appeal, he was only acting on the defensive. He was no traitor to the national cause, but identifies himself still with their truest interests (my nation). Paul was not the accuser, but the accused.

20. For this cause] That is, 'on account of the present turn of affairs and the unfortunate position in which I am placed'.

21 with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak
 22 any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

The hope of Israel] See xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15; xxvi 6-8, notes. The Messianic and resurrection hope. So we Christians of this land may well regard our Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel as 'the hope of India'; and our very spirit of patriotism should urge us to strain every nerve to give to our fellow countrymen that which alone will promote their truest welfare.

Round with this chain] Characteristically, he would shew them the chain as he spoke (xx. 34). Cf. Eph. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 16.

21. **We]** Emphatic. 'We, for our part'.

Neither received letters] As from the Sanhedrin. It would hardly have been possible for letters to have reached them, if despatched subsequently to St. Paul's departure, for the 'sea was shut' for navigation shortly afterwards. And the Sanhedrin had probably never dreamed beforehand that the apostle would appeal unto Caesar.

The brethren] Members, that is, of the Jewish community.

Any harm of thee] We may well believe, however, that some of these Roman Jews must have heard of St. Paul and his work, though they had no information definitely inculcating him.

22. **Desire]** Better 'deem it well', a different verb from the one in v. 18. It is used also in xv. 38 (thought not good).

What thou thinkest] That is, 'the opinions and matters which are in thy heart and mind'.

This sect] See xxiv. 5; and cf. ch. v. 17, note.

Everywhere] See xvii. 30, for the same adverb.

And when they had appointed him a day, they came **23** to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter*, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were **24** spoken, and some disbelieved. And when they agreed **25** not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy ^{1 Or through} Ghost ¹ by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, **26**

Spoken against] As in v. 19.

23. Lodging] A Paulo-Lukan noun (Philem. 22). Apparently, the 'hired dwelling' of v. 30. Lightfoot and others, however, would distinguish it as a place of temporary sojourn in a friend's house before he moved into his more permanent quarters. In any case, he was in military custody.

In great number] Literally 'more (than before)'.
Expounded] See xi. 4, note.

Testifying] See ii. 40, note; and, for 'the kingdom of God', viii. 12. The Messianic kingdom was his main theme; cf. i. 3.

Persuading] See xvii. 4, note. His persuasive powers were brought fully to bear on them 'concerning Jesus', i.e. to shew that He is the true Messiah (cf. xvii. 3; xviii. 5).

From the law and from the prophets] See xiii. 15; xxiv. 14; xxvi. 22. The Jewish Scriptures as a whole.

24. Some believed] The same verb as in v. 23, and in the imperfect tense, 'some were in course of being persuaded'.

Some disbelieved] Also imperfect, 'they maintained an attitude of continued disbelief and disobedience'. Thus the truth of the Gospel divided men in Rome as elsewhere (xiii. 43-5; xiv. 1 2; xvii. 4-5, 32-4).

25. When they agreed not] Literally. 'Being not harmonious', a negative adjective being used which occurs only here. A cognate verb is found, with a positive sense, in xv. 15.

Go thou unto this people, and say,
 By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise un-
 derstand ;
 And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise
 perceive :

- 27 For this people's heart is waxed gross,
 And their ears are dull of hearing,
 And their eyes they have closed ;
 Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
 And hear with their ears,
 And understand with their heart,

They departed] The imperfect tense is graphio, 'they kept departing' one by one, or group by group, in heat and excitement.

One word] As though a final message.

Well spake the Holy Ghost] See i. 16 ; iv. 25, notes.

By Isaiah the prophet] The quotation is from Is. vi. 9-10, verbatim, save for a slight transposition in the first sentence, as in the LXX. It had been cited by our Lord Himself of disobedient hearers in His day (Matt. xiii. 14 ; Mark iv. 12 ; Luke viii. 10 ; Jobn xii. 40), and it now follows, remarkably, at the close of this record of the first ministry of His apostles. It is only too applicable in every land and in every age.

Unto your fathers] Not 'our fathers' now (v. 17). He dissociates himself from unbelieving Jews.

27. Is waxed gross] This verb, which occurs only in this quotation (here and in Matt. xiii. 15), really means 'to become thick or fat'.

Have closed] Also a verb peculiar to this quotation (Matt. xiii. 15). Three figurative expressions are thus used to express the hardening and growing insensibility of those who reject the Gospel message. According to Isaiah's original Hebrew, they are as follows :—

And should turn again,
And I should heal them.

Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear.¹

And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in

1 Some ancient authorities insert ver. 29 and when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having much disputing among themselves. 30

(a) The heart becomes 'fat or thick', i.e. *unfeeling*.

(b) The ears become heavy or dull, i.e. *unheeding*.

(c) The eyes become as though 'smeared over' or 'glued together', i.e. *incapable of opening*. In the Greek translation, the last of these is rather differently expressed (closed). In short, spiritual feeling, spiritual hearing, and spiritual seeing become atrophied and lost. We must beware lest, in India, we incur such judicial hardening by a rejection of God's gracious message to us in the Gospel of His Son.

28. Be it known unto you] Cf. ii. 14; iv. 10; xiii. 38. Here it is the solemn formula of an important proclamation.

This salvation of God] Cf. iv. 12 (note); xiii. 26.

[Is sent unto the Gentiles] Cf. Ps. lxxvii. 2. Thus the solemn scenes which were enacted in Pisidian Antioch (xiii. 46-8), Corinth (xviii. 5-7), and Ephesus (xix. 8-9) are substantially repeated in Rome, and the apostle is compelled to turn reluctantly from his own kith and kin to the Gentiles. 'They', at least, 'will hear'. Verse 29, consigned to the margin, is contained in the Bezan text and some other authorities, but the weight of MSS. evidence is against it.

30. Two whole years] Waiting for his appeal to be heard. During this period, he wrote his Epistles to Philippi, Colossae, Ephesus (Asia), and Philemon; and he had associated with him many loving friends and companions (Eph. vi. 21; Phil. ii. 19-30; Col. iv. 10-14; Philem. vv. 10-11, 23-4). The inference, confirmed by what we read in the Pastoral Epistles, is that he afterwards obtained his release.

31 unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

His own hired dwelling] See v. 23, note. The word is peculiar to this verse. There he dwelt, in the charge of a soldier, to whom he was bound by a light chain attached to his wrist.

Received] Constantly and habitually (imperfect tense).

All that went in unto him] Whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free (Rom. i. 14-16).

31. Preaching] See viii. 5, 12 notes; and cf. v. 23. He 'heralded' in the imperial city a greater kingdom than that of Rome. This expresses the evangelistic side of his work there. Notice that the Acts begins and ends with God's spiritual kingdom (i. 3).

Teaching] See ch. v. 42, note. This may express more particularly the systematic instruction given to inquirers and Christians; of. 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11.

The things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ] The Gospel, that is, in all its length and breadth. The full title of our Saviour is used significantly at the close of the book of His triumphs; cf. xi. 17; xv. 26; and see ii. 36. He is Lord and Master; Saviour and Friend; Messiah and King.

With all boldness] See ii. 29, note (freely). At Rome, the metropolis of the empire, his mouth was 'opened to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel' (Eph. vi. 19), and great and glorious were the results (Phil. i. 12-14).

None forbidding him] Literally 'unhindered', an adverb peculiar to this verse. He had free scope in spite of his chain. A prisoner, yet unhindered! It is significant that the Acts of the Apostles ends with a note of triumph, *unhindered*. Bengel well says 'Victory of the Word of God! Paul at Rome; the apex of the Gospel; the end of the Acts'.

Let us do in India what the great apostle of the Gentiles did in Rome. Let us publish to all men the 'salvation of God' (v. 28). Let us raise the royal banner of the cross and

In this section, however, there is no actual martyrdom,—only several attempts on the life of St. Paul. His actual martyrdom followed at a later period. Moreover, the order of the other 'devices' is not so exact as before. Still, we find the old enemy handling the old weapons. And his attacks, as before, are delivered both from without and from within the Church.

2. *Notice the steady progress of the work and the increase of the Church.*

As to *progress*, we mark the triumphs of the Gospel in Cyprus (xiii. 4-12); the province of Galatia (chapters xiii; xiv); in Macedonia and Achaia (chapters xvi-xviii); in Ephesus and Asia (chapter xix); in Malta and Rome (chapter xxviii). The *increase* of the Church appears alike from these narratives and from the notices contained in xiv. 23; xv. 41; xvi. 4-5; xvii. 4; xviii. 10, 23; xix. 17-20; xix. 26; xx. 2, 8, 17; xxi. 4-5, 7, 8-12; xxi. 20; xxvii. 3; xxviii. 14-15.

3. *Notice the difference between the beginning and end of this part of the history.*

- (1) It begins with Syrian Antioch and ends with imperial Rome.
- (2) It begins with a valedictory meeting (xiii. 1-3) and closes with an inaugural meeting (xxviii. 17-28).
- (3) It begins with a number of prophets and teachers in a congregation (xiii. 1), and concludes with a single herald and teacher in a hired dwelling (xxviii. 30-1).
- (4) It begins with two years or so of travelling (first missionary journey) and ends with two years of stationary work (xxviii. 30).
- (5) It begins with work among Christians (xiii. 1) and closes with work among the heathen (xxviii. 30-1).

V.B.—The Book of the Acts of the Apostles. 4

1. Begins with an 'upper room' and ends with a 'hired dwelling'.
2. Begins among the 'brethren' and ends among the heathen.
3. Begins with the revelation of 'the kingdom of God' (i. 3) and ends with the prevalence and continued proclamation thereof (xxviii. 31).