

had not done on their former visit, but probably with no visible fruit.

they went down into Attaila--a seaport on the Gulf of Pamphylia, drawing to itself the commerce of Egypt and Syria.

26. sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended--(See on [Ac 13:3](#)).

27. when they had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, &c.--As their call and mission had been solemn and formal, in the presence of and by the Church as well as the Holy Ghost, they dutifully, and no doubt with eager joy, convened the church and gave their report of "all that God had done with them," that is, by and for them. **and how**--in particular.

he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles--to such even as before had not been proselytes. (See on [Ac 11:21](#); and on the language, see 1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12; Col 4:3). The ascribing directly to God of such access to the Gentiles is to be noted.

28. there they abode long time--"no little time." From the commencement of the mission till they left Antioch to go up to attend the council at Jerusalem, some four or five years elapsed; and as the missionary journey would probably occupy less than two years, the rest of the time would be the period of their stay at Antioch.

CHAPTER 15

Ac 15:1-35. COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM TO DECIDE ON THE NECESSITY OF CIRCUMCISION FOR THE GENTILE CONVERTS.

1, 2. certain men--See the description of them in Ga 2:4.

2. Paul and Barnabas--now the recognized heads of the Church at Antioch.

had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined--that is, the church did.

that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them--Titus was one (Ga 2:1); probably as an uncircumcised Gentile convert endowed with the gifts of the Spirit. He is not mentioned in the Acts, but only in Second Corinthians, Galatians, Second Timothy, and the Epistle addressed to him [ALFORD].

should go up to Jerusalem . . . about this question--That such a deputation should be formally despatched by the Church of Antioch was natural, as it might be called the mother church of Gentile Christianity.

3-6. being brought on their way by the church--a kind of official escort.

they passed through Phenice--(See on [Ac 11:19](#)).

and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, and they caused great joy to the brethren--As the converts in those parts were Jewish (Ac 11:19), their spirit contrasts favorably with that of others of their nation.

4. And when they were come to Jerusalem--This was Paul's THIRD VISIT TO JERUSALEM after his conversion, and *on this occasion took place what is related in Ga 2:1-10*. (See there).

were received of the church, and the apostles and elders--evidently at a meeting formally convened for this purpose: the deputation being one so influential, and from a church of such note.

they declared all things that God had done with them--(See on [Ac 14:14-27](#)).

6. the apostles and elders came together to consider of this--but in presence, as would seem, of the people (Ac 15:12, 22, 23).

7. Peter, &c.--This is the last mention of him in the Acts, and one worthy of his standing, as formally pronouncing, from the divine decision of the matter already in his own case, in favor of the views which all of Paul's labors were devoted to establishing.

a good while ago--probably about fifteen years before this.

made choice . . . that the Gentiles by my mouth--(See on [Ac 11:21](#)).

8. God, which knoweth the hearts--implying that the real question for admission to full standing in the visible Church is *the state of the heart*. Hence, though that cannot be known by men, no principle of admission to church privileges which *reverses* this can be sound.

9. put no difference between us and them: purifying their hearts by faith--"Purification" here refers to "sprinkling (of the conscience by the blood of Jesus) from dead works to serve the living God." (See on [1Co 6:11](#)). How rich is this brief description of the inward revolution wrought upon the genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus!

10. why tempt--"try," "provoke"

ye God--by standing in the way of His declared purpose.

to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, &c.--He that was circumcised became thereby bound to keep the whole law. (See Ga 5:1-6). It was not then the mere yoke of burdensome ceremonies, but of an obligation which the more earnest and spiritual men became, the more impossible they felt it to fulfil. (See Ro 3:5; Ga 2:4, &c.).

11. through the grace of the Lord Jesus--that is, by that only.

we shall be saved, even as they--circumcision in our case being no advantage, and in their case uncircumcision no loss; but *grace* doing all for both, and the same for each.

12. Then all . . . gave audience to Barnabas and Paul--On this order of the names here, see on [Ac 15:25](#).

declaring what miracles and signs God wrought among the Gentiles by them--This detail of facts, immediately following up those which Peter had recalled to mind, would lead all who waited only for divine teaching to see that God had Himself pronounced the Gentile converts to be disciples in as full standing as the Jews, without circumcision; and the attesting *miracles* to which Paul here refers would tend, in such an assembly to silence opposition.

13. James answered, saying, &c.--Whoever this James was (see on [Ga 1:19](#)), he was the acknowledged head of the church at Jerusalem, and here, as president of the assembly, speaks last, winding up the debate. His decision, though given as his own judgment only, could not be of great weight with the opposing party, from his conservative reverence for all Jewish usages within the circle of Israelitish Christianity.

14-17. Simeon--a *Hebrew* variation of Simon, as in 2Pe 1:1; (*Greek*), the Jewish and family name of Peter.

hath declared how God at the first--answering to Peter's own expression "a good while ago" (Ac 15:7).

did visit the Gentiles to take out of them--in the exercise of His adorable sovereignty.
a people for his name--the honor of his name, or for His glory.

15. to this agree the words of the prophets--generally; but those of Amos (Am 9:11) are specified (nearly as in the *Septuagint version*). The point of the passage lies in the predicted purpose of God, under the new economy, that "the heathen" or "Gentiles" should be "called by His name," or have "His name called upon them." By the "building again of the fallen tabernacle of David," or restoring its decayed splendor, is meant that only and glorious recovery which it was to experience under David's "son and Lord."

18, 19. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning--He who announced these things so long before, and He who had now brought them to pass, were one and the same; so that they were no novelty.

19. Wherefore, my sentence--or "judgment."

is, that we trouble not--with Jewish obligations.

them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God--rather, "are turning." The work is regarded as in progress, and indeed was rapidly advancing.

20. But . . . that they abstain from pollutions of idols--that is, things polluted by having been offered in sacrifice to idols. The heathen were accustomed to give away or sell portions of such animals. From such food James would enjoin the Gentile converts to abstain, lest it should seem to the Jews that they were not entirely weaned from idolatry.

and from fornication--The characteristic sin of heathendom, unblushingly practiced by all ranks and classes, and the indulgence of which on the part of the Gentile converts would to Jews, whose Scriptures branded it as an abomination of the heathen, proclaim them to be yet joined to their old idols.

and from things strangled--which had the blood in them.

and from blood--in every form, as peremptorily forbidden to the Jews, and the eating of which, therefore, on the part of the Gentile converts, would shock their prejudices. See on [Ac 15:28](#).

21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him . . . every sabbath day--thus keeping alive in every Jew those feelings which such practices would shock, and which, therefore, the Gentile converts must carefully respect if the oneness of both classes in Christ was to be practically preserved. The wisdom of these suggestions commended itself to all present.

22, 23. Judas surnamed Barsabas--therefore not the apostle "Judas the brother of James" (Ac 1:13), surnamed "Thaddeus" (Mt 10:3); nor can it be shown that he was a brother of "Joseph called Barsabas" (Ac 1:23). But nothing is known of him beyond what is here said.

and Silas--the same as "Silvanus" in the Epistles. He became Paul's companion on his second missionary journey (Ac 15:40).

chief men among the brethren--selected purposely as such, to express the honor in which they held the church at Antioch, and the deputies they had sent to the council, and, as the matter affected all Gentile converts, to give weight to the written decision of this important assembly. They were "prophets," Ac 15:32 (and see on [Ac 11:27](#)), and as such doubtless their eminence in the church at Jerusalem had been obtained.

23. And they wrote . . . by them--This is the first mention in the New Testament history of *writing* as an element in its development. And the combination here of written and oral transmission of an important decision reminds us of the first occasion of writing mentioned in the Old Testament, where a similar combination occurs (Ex 17:14). But whereas *there* it is the deep *difference* between Israel and the Gentiles which is proclaimed, here it is the *obliteration of that difference* through faith in the Lord Jesus [BAUMGARTEN].

greeting--The only other place in the New Testament where this word occurs (except in the letter of Lysias, Ac 23:26) is Jas 1:1, which seems to show that both letters were drawn up by the same hand [BENGEL].

the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia--showing that churches then existed in Cilicia as well as Syria, which owed their existence, in all likelihood, to Paul's labors during the interval between his return to Tarsus (Ac 9:30) and his departure in company with Barnabas for Antioch (see on [Ac 11:25](#)).

24-27. Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words--without authority or even knowledge of the church at Jerusalem, though they belonged to it, and probably pretended to represent its views.

subverting your souls--Such strong language is evidently designed to express indignation at this attempt, by an unauthorized party, to bring the whole Christian Church under judicial and legal bondage.

25. our beloved Barnabas and Paul--Barnabas is put first here, and in Ac 15:12, on account of his former superior position in the church at Jerusalem (see Ac 9:27; 11:22) --an evidence this that we have the document precisely as written, as also of the credibility of this precious history.

26. Men that have hazarded--literally, "rendered up," as in *will* they did.

their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--Noble testimony to those beloved men! It was doubtless prompted more immediately by the narrative they had just listened to from their own lips (Ac 15:12), and judiciously inserted in this letter, to give them the highest weight as the bearers of it, along with their own deputies.

Judas and Silas . . . shall tell you the same . . . by mouth--Mark here how considerate and tender it was to send men who would be able to say of Barnabas and Paul what could not be expected to come from themselves.

28, 29. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, &c.--The One, inwardly guiding to and setting His seal on the decision come to: the other, the external ecclesiastical authority devoutly embracing, expressing, and conveying to the churches that decision:--a great principle this for the Church in all time.

to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things . . . from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well--The whole language of these prohibitions, and of Ac 15:20, 21, implies that they were designed as concessions to Jewish feelings on the part of the Gentile

converts, and not as things which were all of unchanging obligation. The only cause for hesitation arises from "fornication" being mixed up with the other three things; which has led many to regard the whole as permanently prohibited. But the remarks on Ac 15:20 may clear this (see on [Ac 15:20](#)). The then state of heathen society in respect of all the four things seems the reason for so mixing them up.

31-33. they rejoiced for the consolation--As the same word is in Ac 15:31 properly rendered "exhorted," the meaning probably is "rejoiced for the exhortation" (*Margin*), or advice; so wise in itself and so contrary to the imposition attempted to be practiced upon them by the Judaizers.

32. Judas and Silas, being prophets themselves--that is, inspired teachers.

exhorted the brethren with many words--"much discourse."

and confirmed them--opening up, no doubt, the great principle involved in the controversy now settled, of gratuitous salvation, or the purification of the heart by faith alone (as expressed by Peter, Ac 15:9, 11), and dwelling on the necessity of harmony in principle and affection between the Gentile disciples and their Jewish brethren.

33. were let go in peace--with peace, as the customary parting salutation.

34, 35. it pleased Silas--Silas determined.

to abide there still--(The authorities against the insertion of this verse are strong. It may have been afterwards added to explain Ac 15:40). Doubtless the attraction to Antioch for Silas was Paul's presence there, to whom he seems to have now formed that permanent attachment which the sequel of this book and Paul's Epistles show to have existed.

35. Paul . . . and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching--to the disciples.

and preaching--to those without.

the word of the Lord, with many others--other laborers.

also--How rich must Antioch at this time have been in the ministrations of the Gospel! (*For a painful scene on this occasion between Paul and Peter, see Ga 2:11-14*).

Ac 15:36-46. DISSENSION BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS--THEY PART COMPANY TO PROSECUTE SEPARATE MISSIONARY TOURS.

36. And some days after--How long is a matter of conjecture.

Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren--the true reading is, "the brethren."

in every city where we have preached . . . and see how they do--whether they were advancing or declining, &c.: a pattern for churches and successful missionaries in every age. ("Reader, how stands it with thee?") [BENGEL]. "Paul felt that he was not called to spend a peaceful, though laborious life at Antioch, but that his true work was far off among the Gentiles." We notice here, for the first time, a trace of that tender solicitude for his converts, that earnest longing to see their faces, which appears in the letters which he wrote afterwards, as one of the most remarkable and attractive features of his character. He thought, doubtless, of the Pisidians and Lycaonians, as he thought afterwards at Athens and Corinth of the Thessalonians, from whom he had been lately "taken in presence, not in heart, night and day praying exceedingly that he might see their face and perfect that which was lacking in their

faith" [HOWSON].

37. Barnabas determined to take with them John . . . Mark--his nephew (Col 4:10).

38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them who departed from them--that is, who *had* departed; but the word is stronger than this--"who stood aloof" or "turned away" from them.

from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work--the work yet before them. The allusion is to what is recorded in Ac 13:13 (see on [Ac 13:13](#)).

39. And the contention was so sharp between them--such was the "irritation," or "exacerbation."

that they departed asunder one from the other--Said they not truly to the Lystrians that they were "men of like passions with them"; (Ac 14:15). But *who was to blame?* (1) That John Mark had either tired of the work or shrunk from the dangers and fatigues that yet lay before them, was undeniable; and Paul concluded that what he had done he might, and probably would, do again. Was he wrong in this? (See Pr 25:19). But (2) To this Barnabas might reply that no rule was without exception; that one failure, in a young Christian, was not enough to condemn him for life; that if near relationship might be thought to warp his judgment, it also gave him opportunities of knowing the man better than others; and that as he was himself anxious to be allowed another trial (and the result makes this next to certain), in order that he might wipe out the effect of his former failure and show what "hardness he could now endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," his petition ought not to be rejected. Now, since John Mark *did* retrieve his character in these respects, and a reconciliation took place between Paul and him, so cordial that the apostle expresses more than once the confidence he had in him and the value he set upon his services (Col 4:10, 11; 2Ti 4:11), it may seem that events showed Barnabas to be in the right, and Paul too harsh and hasty in his judgment. But, in behalf of Paul, it may well be answered, that not being able to see into the future he had only the unfavorable past to judge by; that the gentleness of Barnabas (Ac 4:36; 11:24) had already laid him open to imposition (see on [Ga 2:13](#)), to which near relationship would in this case make him more liable; and that in refusing to take John Mark on this missionary journey he was not judging his Christian character nor pronouncing on his fitness for future service, but merely providing in the meantime against being again put to serious inconvenience and having their hands weakened by a possible second desertion. On the whole, then, it seems clear that each of these great servants of--Christ had something to say for himself, in defense of the position which they respectively took up; that while Barnabas was quite able to appreciate the grounds on which Paul proceeded, Paul was not so competent to judge of the considerations which Barnabas probably urged; that while Paul had but one object in view, to see that the companion of their arduous work was one of thoroughly congenial spirit and sufficient nerve, Barnabas, over and above the same desire, might not unreasonably be afraid for the soul of his nephew, lest the refusal to allow him to accompany them on their journey might injure his Christian character and deprive the Church of a true servant of Jesus Christ; and that while both sought only the glory of their common Master, each looked at the question at issue, to some extent, through the medium of his own temperament, which grace sanctifies and refines, but does not destroy--*Paul*, through the medium of absolute devotion to the cause and kingdom of Christ, which, warm and womanly as his affections were, gave a tinge of lofty sternness to his resolves where that seemed to be affected; *Barnabas*, through the medium of the same singleness of heart in Christ's service, though probably not in equal strength (Ga 2:13), but also of a certain natural gentleness which, where a Christian relative was concerned, led him to attach more weight to what seemed for his spiritual good than

Paul could be supposed to do. In these circumstances, it seems quite possible that they might have amicably "agreed to differ," each taking his own companion, as they actually did. But the "paroxysm" (as the word is), the "exacerbation" which is expressly given as the cause of their parting, shows but too plainly, that human infirmity amidst the great labors of the Church at Antioch at length sundered those who had sweetly and lovingly borne together the heat and burden of the day during a protracted tour in the service of Christ. "Therefore let no man glory in men" (1Co 3:21). As for John Mark, although through his uncle's warm advocacy of his cause he was put in a condition to dissipate the cloud that hung over him, how bitter to him must have ever afterwards been the reflection that it was his culpable conduct which gave occasion to whatever was sinful in the strife between Paul and Barnabas, and to a separation in action, though no doubt with a mutual Christian regard, between those who had till then wrought nobly together! How watchful does all this teach Christians, and especially Christian ministers and missionaries, to be against giving way to rash judgment and hot temper towards each other, especially where on both sides the glory of Christ is the ground of difference! How possible is it that in such cases both parties may, on the question at issue, be more or less in the right! How difficult is it even for the most faithful and devoted servants of Christ, differing as they do in their natural temperament even under the commanding influence of grace, to see even important questions precisely in the same light! And if, with every disposition to yield what is unimportant, they still feel it a duty each to stand to his own point, how careful should they be to do it lovingly, each pursuing his own course without disparagement of his Christian brother! And how affectingly does the Lord overrule such difference of judgment and such manifestations of human infirmity, by making them "turn out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel"; as in this case is eminently seen in the two missionary parties instead of one, not travelling over the same ground and carrying their dispute over all the regions of their former loving labors, but dividing the field between them!

and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas--(See on [Ac 15:34](#)) --going two and two, as the Twelve and the Seventy (Mr 6:7; Lu 10:1).

40. and departed, being recommended . . . to the grace of God--(No doubt by some solemn service; see Ac 13:3), as in Ac 14:26. It does not follow from the historian's silence that Barnabas was not so recommended, too; for this is the last mention of Barnabas in the history, whose sole object now is to relate the proceedings of Paul. Nor does it seem quite fair (with DE WETTE, MEYER, HOWSON, ALFORD, HACKET, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, &c.) to conclude from this that the Church at Antioch took that marked way of showing their sympathy with Paul in opposition to Barnabas.

41. and he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches--"It is very likely that Paul and Barnabas made a deliberate and amicable arrangement to divide the region of their first mission between them; Paul taking the *continental*, and Barnabas the *insular*, part of the proposed visitation. If Barnabas visited Salamis and Paphos, and if Paul (travelling westward), after passing through Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, went as far as Antioch in Pisidia, the whole circuit of the proposed visitation was actually accomplished, for it does not appear that any converts had been made at Perga and Attalia" [HOWSON]. "This second missionary tour appears to have proceeded at first solely from the desire of visiting the churches already planted. In the end, however, it took a much wider sweep, for it brought the apostle to Europe" [OLSHAUSEN].

CHAPTER 16

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Ac 15:41-16:5. VISITATION OF THE CHURCHES FORMERLY ESTABLISHED,
TIMOTHEUS HERE JOINING THE MISSIONARY PARTY.

41. he went through Syria and Cilicia--(See on [Ac 15:23](#)). Taking probably the same route as when despatched in haste from Jerusalem to Tarsus, he then went by land (see on [Ac 9:30](#)).

1-5. Then came he to Derbe and Lystra; and, behold, a certain disciple was there--that is, at Lystra (not Derbe, as some conclude from Ac 20:4).

named Timotheus--(See on [Ac 14:20](#)). As Paul styles him "his own son in the faith" (1Ti 1:2), he must have been gained to Christ at the apostle's first visit; and as Paul says he "had fully known his persecutions which came on him at Lystra" (2Ti 3:10, 11), he may have been in that group of disciples that surrounded the apparently lifeless body of the apostle outside the walls of Lystra, and that at a time of life when the mind receives its deepest impressions from the spectacle of innocent suffering and undaunted courage [HOWSON]. His would be one of "the souls of the disciples confirmed" at the apostle's second visit, "exhorted to continue in the faith, and" warned "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Ac 14:21, 22).

the son of a certain . . . Jewess--"The unfeigned faith which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois" descended to "his mother Eunice," and thence it passed to this youth (2Ti 1:5), who "from a child knew the Holy Scriptures" (2Ti 3:15). His gifts and destination to the ministry of Christ had already been attested (1Ti 1:18; 4:14); and though some ten years after this Paul speaks of him as still young (1Ti 4:12), "he was already well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium" (Ac 16:2), and consequently must have been well known through all that quarter.

but his father was a Greek--Such mixed marriages, though little practiced, and disliked by the stricter Jews in Palestine, must have been very frequent among the Jews of the dispersion, especially in remote districts, where but few of the scattered people were settled [HOWSON].

3. Him would Paul have to go forth with him--This is in harmony with all we read in the Acts and Epistles of Paul's affectionate and confiding disposition. He had no relative ties which were of service to him in his work; his companions were few and changing; and though Silas would supply the place of Barnabas, it was no weakness to yearn for the society of one who might become, what Mark once appeared to be, a *son* in the Gospel [HOWSON]. And such he indeed proved to be, the most attached and serviceable of his associates (Php 2:19-23; 1Co 4:17; 16:10, 11; 1Th 3:1-6). His double connection, with the Jews by the mother's side and the Gentiles by the father's, would strike the apostle as a peculiar qualification for his own sphere of labor. "So far as appears, Timothy is the first Gentile who after his conversion comes before us as a regular missionary; for what is said of Titus (Ga 2:3) refers to a later period" [WIES]. But before his departure, Paul

took and circumcised him--a rite which every Israelite might perform.

because of the Jews . . . for they knew all that his father was a Greek--This seems to imply that the father was no proselyte. Against the wishes of a Gentile father no Jewish mother was, as the Jews themselves say, permitted to circumcise her son. We thus see why all the religion of Timothy is traced to the female side of the family (2Ti 1:5). "Had Timothy not been circumcised, a storm would have gathered round the apostle in his farther progress. His fixed line of procedure was to act on the cities through the synagogues; and to preach the Gospel to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. But such a course would have been impossible had not

Timothy been circumcised. He must necessarily have been repelled by that people who endeavored once to murder Paul because they imagined he had taken a Greek into the temple (Ac 21:29). The very intercourse of social life would have been almost impossible, for it was still "an abomination" for the circumcised to eat with the uncircumcised" [HOWSON]. In refusing to compel Titus afterwards to be circumcised (Ga 2:3) at the bidding of Judaizing Christians, as necessary to salvation, he only vindicated "the truth of the Gospel" (Ga 2:5); in circumcising Timothy, "to the Jews he became as a Jew that he might gain the Jews." Probably Timothy's ordination took place now (1Ti 4:14; 2Ti 1:6); and it was a service, apparently, of much solemnity--"before many witnesses" (1Ti 6:12).

4, 5. And as they went through the cities, they delivered . . . the decrees . . . And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily--not the churches, but the number of their members, by this visit and the written evidence laid before them of the triumph of Christian liberty at Jerusalem, and the wise measures there taken to preserve the unity of the Jewish and Gentile converts.

Ac 16:6-12. THEY BREAK NEW GROUND IN PHRYGIA AND GALATIA--THEIR COURSE IN THAT DIRECTION BEING MYSTERIOUSLY HEDGED UP, THEY TRAVEL WESTWARD TO TROAS, WHERE THEY ARE DIVINELY DIRECTED TO MACEDONIA--THE HISTORIAN HIMSELF HERE JOINING THE MISSIONARY PARTY, THEY EMBARK FOR NEAPOLIS, AND REACH PHILIPPI.

6-8. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia--proceeding in a northwesterly direction. At this time must have been formed "the churches of Galatia" (Ga 1:2; 1Co 16:1); founded, as we learn from the Epistle to the Galatians (particularly Ga 4:19), by the apostle Paul, and which were already in existence when he was on his *third* missionary journey, as we learn from Ac 18:23, where it appears that he was no less successful in Phrygia. *Why* these proceedings, so interesting as we should suppose, are not here detailed, it is not easy to say; for the various reasons suggested are not very satisfactory: for example, that the historian had not joined the party [ALFORD]; that he was in haste to bring the apostle to Europe [OLSHAUSEN]; that the main stream of the Church's development was from Jerusalem to Rome, and the apostle's labors in Phrygia and Galatia lay quite out of the line of that direction [BAUMGARTEN].

and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost--speaking by some prophet, see on [Ac 11:27](#).

to preach the word in Asia--not the great Asiatic continent, nor even the rich peninsula now called Asia Minor, but only so much of its western coast as constituted the Roman province of Asia.

7. After they were come to Mysia--where, as being part of Roman Asia, they were forbidden to labor (Ac 16:8).

they assayed--or attempted

to go into--or, towards.

Bithynia--to the northeast.

but the Spirit--speaking as before.

suffered them not--probably because, (1) Europe was ripe for the labors of this missionary party; and (2) other instruments were to be honored to establish the Gospel in the eastern regions of Asia Minor, especially the apostle Peter (see 1Pe 1:1). By the end of the first century, as testified by PLINY the governor, Bithynia was filled with Christians. "This is the first time that the Holy Ghost is expressly spoken of as determining the course they were to follow in their

efforts to evangelize the nations, and it was evidently designed to show that whereas hitherto the diffusion of the Gospel had been carried on in unbroken course, connected by natural points of junction, it was now to take a leap to which it could not be impelled but by an immediate and independent operation of the Spirit; and though primarily, this intimation of the Spirit was only negative, and referred but to the immediate neighborhood, we may certainly conclude that Paul took it for a sign that a new epoch was now to commence in his apostolic labors" [BAUMGARTEN].

8. came down to Troas--a city on the northeast coast of the Ægean Sea, the boundary of Asia Minor on the west; the region of which was the scene of the great Trojan war.

9, 10. a vision appeared to Paul in the night--while awake, for it is not called a dream.

There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us--Stretching his eye across the Ægean Sea, from Troas on the northeast, to the Macedonian hills, visible on the northwest, the apostle could hardly fail to think this the destined scene of his future labors; and, if he retired to rest with this thought, he would be thoroughly prepared for the remarkable intimation of the divine will now to be given him. This visional Macedonian discovered himself by what he said. But it was a cry not of conscious *desire* for the Gospel, but of deep *need* of it and unconscious *preparedness* to receive it, not only in that region, but, we may well say, throughout all that western empire which Macedonia might be said to represent. It was a virtual confession "that the highest splendor of heathendom, which we must recognize in the arts of Greece and in the polity and imperial power of Rome, had arrived at the end of all its resources. God had left the Gentile peoples to walk in their own ways (Ac 14:2). They had sought to gain salvation for themselves; but those who had carried it farthest along the paths of natural development were now pervaded by the feeling that all had indeed been vanity. This feeling is the simple, pure result of all the history of heathendom. And Israel, going along the way which God had marked out for him, had likewise arrived at his end. At last he is in a condition to realize his original vocation, by becoming the guide who is to lead the Gentiles unto God, the only Author and Creator of man's redemption; and Paul is in truth the very person in whom this vocation of Israel is now a present divine reality, and to whom, by this nocturnal apparition of the Macedonian, the preparedness of the heathen world to receive the ministry of Israel towards the Gentiles is confirmed" [BAUMGARTEN]. *This voice cries from heathendom still to the Christian Church, and never does the Church undertake the work of missions, nor any missionary go forth from it, in the right spirit, save in obedience to this cry.*

10. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia--The "we," here first introduced, is a modest intimation that the historian himself had now joined the missionary party. (The modern objections to this are quite frivolous). Whether Paul's broken health had anything to do with this arrangement for having "the beloved physician" with him [WIES], can never be known with certainty; but that he would deem himself honored in taking care of so precious a life, there can be no doubt.

11, 12. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came--literally, "ran."
with a straight course--that is, "ran before the wind."

to Samothracia--a lofty island on the Thracian coast, north from Troas, with an inclination westward. The wind must have set in strong from the south or south-southeast to bring them there so soon, as the current is strong in the opposite direction, and they afterwards took five days to what they now did in two (Ac 20:6) [HOWSON].

next day to Neapolis--on the Macedonian, or rather Thracian, coast, about sixty-five miles

from Samothracia, and ten from Philippi, of which it is the harbor.

12. Philippi . . . the chief--rather, perhaps, "the first"

city of that part of Macedonia--The meaning appears to be--the first city one comes to, proceeding from Neapolis. The sense given in our version hardly consists with fact.

a colony--that is, possessing all the privileges of Roman citizenship, and, as such, both exempted from scourging and (in ordinary cases) from arrest, and entitled to appeal from the local magistrate to the emperor. Though the Pisidian *Antioch* and *Troas* were also "colonies," the fact is mentioned in this history of Philippi only on account of the frequent references to Roman privileges and duties in the sequel of the chapter.

Ac 16:12-34. AT PHILIPPI, LYDIA IS GAINED AND WITH HER HOUSEHOLD BAPTIZED--AN EVIL SPIRIT IS EXPELLED, PAUL AND SILAS ARE SCOURGED, IMPRISONED, AND MANACLED, BUT MIRACULOUSLY SET FREE, AND THE JAILER WITH ALL HIS HOUSEHOLD CONVERTED AND BAPTIZED.

12, 13. we were in that city abiding certain days--waiting till the sabbath came round: their whole stay must have extended to some weeks. As their rule was to begin with the Jews and proselytes, they did nothing till the time when they knew that they would convene for worship.

13. on the sabbath day--the first after their arrival, as the words imply.

we went out of the city--rather, as the true reading is, "outside of the (city) gate."

by a river-side--one of the small streams which gave name to the place ere the city was founded by Philip of Macedon.

where prayer was wont to be made--or a prayer-meeting held. It is plain there was no synagogue at Philippi (contrast Ac 17:1), the number of the Jews being small. The meeting appears to have consisted wholly of women, and these not all Jewish. The neighborhood of streams was preferred, on account of the ceremonial washings used on such occasions.

we sat down and spake unto the women, &c.--a humble congregation, and simple manner of preaching. *But here and thus were gathered the first-fruits of Europe unto Christ, and they were of the female sex*, of whose accession and services honorable mention will again and again be made.

14, 15. Lydia--a common name among the Greeks and Romans.

a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira--on the confines of Lydia and Phrygia. The Lydians, particularly the inhabitants of Thyatira, were celebrated for their dyeing, in which they inherited the reputation of the Tyrians. Inscriptions to this effect, yet remaining, confirm the accuracy of our historian. This woman appears to have been in good circumstances, having an establishment at Philippi large enough to accommodate the missionary party (Ac 16:15), and receiving her goods from her native town.

which worshipped God--that is, was a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and as such present at this meeting.

whose heart the Lord opened--that is, the Lord Jesus (see Ac 16:15; and compare Lu 24:45; Mt 11:27).

that she attended to the things . . . spoken by Paul--"showing that the inclination of the heart towards the truth originates not in the will of man. The first disposition to turn to the Gospel is a work of grace" [OLSHAUSEN]. Observe here the place assigned to "giving attention" or "heed" to the truth--that species of attention which consists in having the whole

mind engrossed with it, and in apprehending and drinking it in, in its vital and saving character.

15. And when . . . baptized . . . and her household--probably without much delay. The mention of baptism here for the first time in connection with the labors of Paul, while it was doubtless performed on all his former converts, indicates a special importance in this first European baptism. Here also is the first mention of a Christian *household*. Whether it included children, also in that case baptized, is not explicitly stated; but the presumption, as in other cases of household baptism, is that it did. Yet the question of infant baptism must be determined on other grounds; and such incidental allusions form only part of the historical materials for ascertaining the practice of the Church.

she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord--the Lord Jesus; that is, "By the faith on Him which ye have recognized in me by baptism." There is a beautiful modesty in the expression.

And she constrained us--The word seems to imply that they were reluctant, but were overborne.

16-18. as we went to prayer--The words imply that it was *on their way to the usual place of public prayer*, by the river-side, that this took place; therefore not on the same day with what had just occurred.

a . . . damsel--a female servant, and in this case a slave (Ac 16:19).

possessed of a spirit of divination--or, of Python, that is, a spirit supposed to be inspired by the Pythian Apollo, or of the same nature. The reality of this demoniacal possession is as undeniable as that of any in the Gospel history.

17. These men are servants of the most high God, &c.--Glorious testimony! But see on [Lu 4:41](#).

this did she many days--that is, on many successive occasions when on their way to their usual place of meeting, or when engaged in religious services.

18. Paul being grieved--for the poor victim; grieved to see such power possessed by the enemy of man's salvation, and grieved to observe the malignant design with which this high testimony was borne to Christ.

19. when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas--as the leading persons.

and drew them into the market-place--or Forum, where the courts were.

to the magistrates, saying, &c.--We have here a full and independent confirmation of the reality of this supernatural cure, since on any other supposition such conduct would be senseless.

20. These men, being Jews--objects of dislike, contempt, and suspicion by the Romans, and at this time of more than usual prejudice.

do exceedingly trouble our city--See similar charges, Ac 17:6; 24:5; 1Ki 18:17. There is some color of truth in all such accusations, in so far as the Gospel, and generally the fear of God, as a reigning principle of human action, is in a godless world a thoroughly *revolutionary* principle . . . How far external commotion and change will in any case attend the triumph of this principle depends on the breadth and obstinacy of the resistance it meets with.

21. And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being

Romans--Here also there was a measure of truth; as the introduction of new gods was forbidden by the laws, and this might be thought to apply to any change of religion. But the whole charge was pure hypocrisy; for as these men would have let the missionaries preach what religion they pleased if they had not dried up the source of their gains, so they conceal the real cause of their rage under color of a zeal for religion, and law, and good order: so Ac 17:6, 7; 19:25, 27.

22. the multitude rose up together against them--so Ac 19:28, 34; 21:30; Lu 23:18.

the magistrates rent off their--Paul's and Silas'

clothes--that is, ordered the lictors, or rod-bearers, to tear them off, so as to expose their naked bodies (see on [Ac 16:37](#)). The word expresses the roughness with which this was done to prisoners preparatory to whipping.

and commanded to beat them--without any trial (Ac 16:37), to appease the popular rage. Thrice, it seems, Paul endured this indignity (2Co 11:25).

23, 24. when they had laid many stripes upon them--the bleeding wounds from which they were not washed till it was done by the converted jailer (Ac 16:33).

charged the jailer . . . who . . . thrust them into the inner prison--"pestilential cells, damp and cold, from which the light was excluded, and where the chains rusted on the prisoners. One such place may be seen to this day on the slope of the Capitol at Rome" [HOWSON].

24. made their feet fast in the stocks--an instrument of torture as well as confinement, made of wood bound with iron, with holes for the feet, which were stretched more or less apart according to the severity intended. (ORIGEN at a later period, besides having his neck thrust into an iron collar, lay extended for many days with his feet apart in the rack). Though jailers were proverbially unfeeling, the manner in which the order was given in this case would seem to warrant all that was done.

25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises--literally, "praying, were singing praises"; that is, while engaged in pouring out their hearts in prayer, had broken forth into singing, and were hymning loud their joy. As the word here employed is that used to denote the Paschal hymn sung by our Lord and His disciples after their last Passover (Mt 26:30), and which we know to have consisted of Ps 113:1-118:29, which was chanted at that festival, it is probable that it was portions of the Psalms, so rich in such matter, which our joyous sufferers chanted forth; nor could any be more seasonable and inspiring to them than those very six Psalms, which every devout Jew would no doubt know by heart. "*He giveth songs in the night*" (Job 35:10). Though their bodies were still bleeding and tortured in the stocks, their spirits, under "the expulsive power of a new affection," rose above suffering, and made the prison walls resound with their song. "In these midnight hymns, by the imprisoned witnesses for Jesus Christ, the whole might of Roman injustice and violence against the Church is not only set at naught, but converted into a foil to set forth more completely the majesty and spiritual power of the Church, which as yet the world knew nothing of. And if the sufferings of these two witnesses of Christ are the beginning and the type of numberless martyrdoms which were to flow upon the Church from the same source, in like manner the unparalleled triumph of the Spirit over suffering was the beginning and the pledge of a spiritual power which we afterwards see shining forth so triumphantly and irresistibly in the many martyrs of Christ who were given up as a prey to the same imperial might of Rome" [NEANDER in BAUMGARTEN].

and the prisoners heard them--literally, "were listening to them," that is, when the astounding events immediately to be related took place; not asleep, but wide awake and rapt (no doubt) in wonder at what they heard.

26-28. And suddenly there was a great earthquake--in answer, doubtless, to the prayers and expectations of the sufferers that, for the truth's sake and the honor of their Lord, some interposition would take place.

every one's bands--that is, the bands of all the prisoners.

were loosed--not by the earthquake, of course, but by a miraculous energy accompanying it. By this and the joyous strains which they had heard from the sufferers, not to speak of the change wrought on the jailer, these prisoners could hardly fail to have their hearts in some measure opened to the truth; and this part of the narrative seems the result of information afterwards communicated by one or more of these men.

27. the keeper . . . awaking . . . drew . . . his sword, and would have killed himself, &c.--knowing that his life was forfeited in that case (Ac 12:19; and compare Ac 27:42).

28. But Paul cried with a loud voice--the better to arrest the deed.

Do thyself no harm, for we are all here--What divine calmness and self-possession! No elation at their miraculous liberation, or haste to take advantage of it; but one thought filled the apostle's mind at that moment--anxiety to save a fellow creature from sending himself into eternity, ignorant of the only way of life; and his presence of mind appears in the assurance which he so promptly gives to the desperate man, that his prisoners had none of them fled as he feared. But how, it has been asked by skeptical critics, could Paul in his inner prison know what the jailer was about to do? In many conceivable ways, without supposing any supernatural communication. Thus, if the jailer slept at the door of "the inner prison," which suddenly flew open when the earthquake shook the foundations of the building; if, too, as may easily be conceived, he uttered some cry of despair on seeing the doors open; and, if the clash of the steel, as the affrighted man drew it hastily from the scabbard, was audible but a few yards off, in the dead midnight stillness, increased by the awe inspired in the prisoners by the miracle--what difficulty is there in supposing that Paul, perceiving in a moment how matters stood, after crying out, stepped hastily to him, uttering the noble entreaty here recorded? Not less flat is the question, why the other liberated prisoners did not make their escape:--as if there were the smallest difficulty in understanding how, under the resistless conviction that there must be something supernatural in their instantaneous liberation without human hand, such wonder and awe should possess them as to take away for the time not only all desire of escape, but even all thought on the subject.

29, 30. Then he called for a light, and sprang in . . . and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said--How graphic this rapid succession of minute details, evidently from the parties themselves, the prisoners and the jailer, who would talk over every feature of the scene once and again, in which the hand of the Lord had been so marvellously seen.

30. Sirs, what must I do to be saved?--If this question should seem in advance of any light which the jailer could be supposed to possess, let it be considered (1) that the "trembling" which came over him could not have arisen from any fear for the safety of his prisoners, for they were all there; and if it had, he would rather have proceeded to secure them again than leave them, to fall down before Paul and Silas. For the same reason it is plain that his trembling had nothing to do with any account he would have to render to the magistrates. Only one explanation of it can be given--that he had become all at once alarmed about his spiritual state, and that though, a moment before, he was ready to plunge into eternity with the guilt of self-murder on his head,

without a thought of the sin he was committing and its awful consequences, his unfitnes to appear before God, and his need of salvation, now flashed full upon his soul and drew from the depths of his spirit the cry here recorded. If still it be asked how it could take such definite shape, let it be considered (2) that the jailer could hardly be ignorant of the nature of the charges on which these men had been imprisoned, seeing they had been publicly whipped by order of the magistrates, which would fill the whole town with the facts of the case, including that strange cry of the demoniac from day to-day--"These men are the servants of the most high God, which *show unto us the way of salvation*"--words proclaiming not only the divine commission of the preachers, but the news of salvation they were sent to tell, the miraculous expulsion of the demon and the rage of her masters. All this, indeed, would go for nothing with such a man, until roused by the mighty earthquake which made the building to rock; then despair seizing him at the sight of the open doors, the sword of self-destruction was suddenly arrested by words from one of those prisoners such as he would never imagine could be spoken in their circumstances--words evidencing something divine about them. Then would flash across him the light of a new discovery; "That was a true cry which the Pythoness uttered, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation! That I now must know, and from them, as divinely sent to me, must I learn that way of salvation!'" Substantially, this is the cry of every awakened sinner, though the degree of light and the depths of anxiety it expresses will be different in each case.

31-34. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved--The brevity, simplicity, and directness of this reply are, in the circumstances, singularly beautiful. Enough at that moment to have his faith directed simply to the Saviour, with the assurance that this would bring to his soul the needed and sought salvation--the *how* being a matter for after teaching.

thou shalt be saved, and thy house--(See on [Lu 19:10](#)).

32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord--unfolding now, doubtless, more fully what "the Lord Jesus Christ" was to whom they had pointed his faith, and what the "salvation" was which this would bring him.

and to all that were in his house--who from their own dwelling (under the same roof no doubt with the prison) had crowded round the apostles, aroused first by the earthquake. (From their addressing the Gospel message "to all that were in the house" it is not necessary to infer that it contained no children, but merely that as it contained adults besides the jailer himself, so to all of these, as alone of course fit to be addressed, they preached the word).

33. And he took them--the word implies change of place.

the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes--in the well or fountain which was within or near the precincts of the prison [HOWSON]. The mention of "the same hour of the night" seems to imply that they had to go forth into the open air, which, unseasonable as the hour was, they did. These bleeding wounds had never been thought of by the indifferent jailer. But now, when his whole heart was opened to his spiritual benefactors, he cannot rest until he has done all in his power for their bodily relief.

and was baptized, he and all his, straightway--probably at the same fountain, since it took place "straightway"; the one washing on his part being immediately succeeded by the other on theirs.

34. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing--that is, as the expression implies, "rejoiced because he had believed."
in God--as a converted heathen, for the faith of a *Jew* would not be so expressed [ALFORD].

with all his house--the wondrous change on himself and the whole house filling his soul with joy. "This is the second house which, in the Roman city of Philippi, has been consecrated by faith in Jesus, and of which the inmates, by hospitable entertainment of the Gospel witnesses, have been sanctified to a new beginning of domestic life, pleasing and acceptable to God. The first result came to pass in consequence simply of the preaching of the Gospel; the second was the fruit of a testimony sealed and ennobled by suffering" [BAUMGARTEN].

35, 36. when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go--The cause of this change can only be conjectured. When the commotion ceased, reflection would soon convince them of the injustice they had done, even supposing the prisoners had been entitled to no special privileges; and if rumor reached them that the prisoners were somehow under supernatural protection, they might be the more awed into a desire to get rid of them.

36. the keeper--overjoyed to have such orders to execute.
told this . . . to Paul . . . now therefore . . . go in peace--Very differently did Paul receive such orders.

37. Paul said unto them--to the sergeants who had entered the prison along with the jailer, that they might be able to report that the men had departed.

They have beaten us openly--The *publicity* of the injury done them, exposing their naked and bleeding bodies to the rude populace, was evidently the most stinging feature of it to the apostle's delicate feeling, and to this accordingly he alludes to the Thessalonians, probably a year after: "Even after we had suffered before, and *were shamefully entreated* (or 'insulted') as ye know at Philippi" (1Th 2:2).

uncondemned--unconvicted on trial.

being Romans--(See on [Ac 22:28](#)).

and cast us into prison--both illegal. Of Silas' citizenship, if meant to be included, we know nothing.

and now do they thrust us out--hurry us out--see Mr 9:38, *Greek*.

privily?--Mark the intended contrast between the *public* insult they had inflicted and the *private* way in which they ordered them to be off.

nay verily--no, indeed.

but let them come themselves and fetch us out--by open and formal act, equivalent to a public declaration of their innocence.

38. they feared when they heard they were Romans--their authority being thus imperilled; for they were liable to an action for what they had done.

39, 40. And they came--in person.

and besought them--not to complain of them. What a contrast this suppliant attitude of the preachers of Philippi to the tyrannical air with which they had the day before treated the preachers! (See Isa 60:14; Re 3:9).

brought them out--conducted them forth from the prison into the street, as insisted on.

and desired--"requested."

them to depart out of the city--perhaps fearing again to excite the populace.

40. And they went out of the prison--Having attained their object--to vindicate their civil rights, by the infraction of which in this case the Gospel in their persons had been illegally

affronted--they had no mind to carry the matter farther. Their citizenship was valuable to them only as a shield against unnecessary injuries to their Master's cause. What a beautiful mixture of *dignity* and *meekness* is this! Nothing secular, which may be turned to the account of the Gospel, is morbidly disregarded; in any other view, nothing of this nature is set store by:--an example this for all ages.

and entered into the house of Lydia--as if to show by this leisurely proceeding that they had not been made to leave, but were at full liberty to consult their own convenience.

and when they had seen the brethren--not only her family and the jailer's, but probably others now gained to the Gospel.

they comforted them--rather, perhaps, "exhorted" them, which would include comfort. "*This assembly of believers in the house of Lydia was the first church that had been founded in Europe*" [BAUMGARTEN].

and departed--but not all; for two of the company remained behind (see on [Ac 17:14](#)): *Timotheus*, of whom the Philippians "learned the proof" that he honestly cared for their state, and was truly like-minded with Paul, "serving with him in the Gospel as a son with his father" (Php 2:19-23); and *Luke*, "whose praise is in the Gospel," though he never praises himself or relates his own labors, and though we only trace his movements in connection with Paul, by the change of a pronoun, or the unconscious variation of his style. In the seventeenth chapter the narrative is again in the *third* person, and the pronoun is not changed to the *second* till we come to Ac 20:5. The modesty with which Luke leaves out all mention of his own labors need hardly be pointed out. We shall trace him again when he rejoins Paul in the same neighborhood. His vocation as a physician may have brought him into connection with these contiguous coasts of Asia and Europe, and he may (as MR. SMITH suggests, "Shipwreck," &c.) have been in the habit of exercising his professional skill as a surgeon at sea [HOWSON].

CHAPTER 17

Ac 17:1-15. AT THESSALONICA THE SUCCESS OF PAUL'S PREACHING ENDANGERING HIS LIFE, HE IS DESPATCHED BY NIGHT TO BEREIA, WHERE HIS MESSAGE MEETS WITH ENLIGHTENED ACCEPTANCE--A HOSTILE MOVEMENT FROM THESSALONICA OCCASIONS HIS SUDDEN DEPARTURE FROM BEREIA--HE ARRIVES AT ATHENS.

1. when they had passed through Amphipolis--thirty-three miles southwest of Philippi, on the river Strymon, and at the head of the gulf of that name, on the northern coast of the Ægean Sea.

and Apollonia--about thirty miles southwest of Amphipolis; but the exact site is not known.

they came to Thessalonica--about thirty-seven miles due west from Apollonia, at the head of the Thermaic (or Thessalonian) Gulf, at the northwestern extremity of the Ægean Sea; the principal and most populous city in Macedonia. "We see at once how appropriate a place it was for one of the starting-points of the Gospel in Europe, and can appreciate the force of what Paul said to the Thessalonians within a few months of his departure from them: "From you, the word of the Lord sounded forth like a trumpet, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place,"" (1Th 1:8) [HOWSON].

where was a synagogue of the Jews--implying that (as at Philippi) there was none at Amphipolis and Apollonia.

2-4. Paul, as his manner was--always to begin with the Jews.

went in unto them--In writing to the converts but a few months after this, he reminds them

of the courage and superiority to indignity, for the Gospel's sake, which this required after the shameful treatment he had so lately experienced at Philippi (1Th 2:2).

3. Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, &c.--His preaching, it seems, was chiefly expository, and designed to establish from the Old Testament Scriptures (1) that the predicted Messiah was to be a suffering and dying, and therefore a rising, Messiah; (2) that this Messiah was none other than Jesus of Nazareth.

4. consorted--cast in their lot.

with Paul and Silas--Compare 2Co 8:5.

of the chief women--female proselytes of distinction. From the First Epistle to the Thessalonians it appears that the converts were nearly all Gentiles; not only such as had before been proselytes, who would be gained in the synagogue, but such as up to that time had been idolaters (1Th 1:9, 10). During his stay, while Paul supported himself by his own labor (1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:7-9), he received supplies once and again from the Philippians, of which he makes honorable acknowledgment (Php 4:15, 16).

5-9. the Jews . . . moved with envy--seeing their influence undermined by this stranger.
lewd fellows of the baser sort--better, perhaps, "worthless market people," that is, idle loungers about the market-place, of indifferent character.

gathered a company--rather, "having raised a mob."

assaulted the house of Jason--with whom Paul and Silas abode (Ac 17:7), one of Paul's kinsmen, apparently (Ro 16:21), and from his name, which was sometimes used as a *Greek* form of the word *Joshua* [GROTIUS], probably a Hellenistic Jew.

sought to bring them--Jason's lodgers.

6. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers--literally, "the politarchs"; the very name given to the magistrates of Thessalonica in an inscription on a still remaining arch of the city--so minute is the accuracy of this history.

crying, These that have turned the world upside down--(See on [Ac 16:20](#)).

7. all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, &c.--meaning, probably, nothing but what is specified in the next words.

saying . . . there is another king, one Jesus--(See on [Joh 19:12](#)).

9. And when they had taken security of Jason and of the other--"the others"--probably making them deposit a money pledge that the preachers should not again endanger the public peace.

10-12. the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night--for it would have been as useless as rash to attempt any further preaching at that time, and the conviction of this probably made his friends the more willing to pledge themselves against any present continuance of missionary effort.

unto Berea--fifty or sixty miles southwest of Thessalonica; a town even still of considerable population and importance.

11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica--The comparison is between *the Jews* of the two places; for the triumphs of the Gospel at Thessalonica were mostly among the

Gentiles. See on [Ac 17:2-4](#).

in that they received the word with all readiness of mind--heard it not only without prejudice, but with eager interest, "in an honest and good heart" (Lu 8:17), with sincere desire to be taught aright (see Joh 7:17). Mark the "nobility" ascribed to this state of mind.

searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so--whether the *Christian* interpretation which the apostle put upon the Old Testament Scriptures was the true one.

12. Therefore many of them believed--convinced that Jesus of Nazareth whom Paul preached was indeed the great Promise and Burden of the Old Testament. From this it is undeniable, (1) that *the people*, no less than the ministers of the Church, *are entitled and bound to search the Scriptures*; (2) that *they are entitled and bound to judge, on their own responsibility, whether the teaching they receive from the ministers of the Church is according to the word of God*; (3) that *no faith but such as results from personal conviction ought to be demanded, or is of any avail*.

of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men--which were Greeks.

not a few--"The upper classes in these European-Greek and Romanized towns were probably better educated than those of Asia Minor" [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

13. the Jews of Thessalonica . . . came thither also--"like hunters upon their prey, as they had done before from Iconium to Lystra" [HOWSON].

14. immediately the brethren--the converts gathered at Berea.

sent away Paul--as before from Jerusalem (Ac 9:30), and from Thessalonica (Ac 17:10). How long he stayed at Berea we know not; but as we know that he longed and expected soon to return to the Thessalonians (1Th 2:17), it is probable he remained some weeks at least, and only abandoned his intention of revisiting Thessalonica at that time when the virulence of his enemies there, stimulated by his success at Berea, brought them down thither to counterwork him.

to go as it were to the sea--rather, perhaps, "in the direction of the sea." Probably he delayed fixing his next destination till he should reach the coast, and the providence of God should guide him to a vessel bound for the destined spot. Accordingly, it was only on arriving at Athens, that the convoy of Berean brethren, who had gone thus far with him, were sent back to bid Silas and Timothy follow him thither.

Silas and Timotheus abode there still--"to build it up in its holy faith, to be a comfort and support in its trials and persecutions, and to give it such organization as might be necessary" [HOWSON]. Connecting this with the apostle's leaving Timothy and Luke at Philippi on his own departure (see on [Ac 16:40](#)), we may conclude that this was his fixed plan for cherishing the first beginning of the Gospel in European localities, and organizing the converts. Timotheus must have soon followed the apostle to Thessalonica, the bearer, probably, of one of the Philippian "contributions to his necessity" (Php 4:15, 16), and from thence he would with Silas accompany him to Berea.

15. Silas and Timotheus to come to him with all speed--He probably wished their company and aid in addressing himself to so new and great a sphere as Athens. Accordingly it is added that he "waited for them" there, as if unwilling to do anything till they came. That they did come, there is no good reason to doubt (as some excellent critics do). For though Paul himself says to the Thessalonians that he "thought it good to be left at Athens alone" (1Th 3:1), he immediately adds that he "sent Timotheus to establish and comfort them" (Ac 17:2); meaning, surely, that he despatched him from Athens back to Thessalonica. He had indeed sent

for him to Athens; but, probably, when it appeared that little fruit was to be reaped there, while Thessalonica was in too interesting a state to be left uncherished, he seems to have thought it better to send him back again. (The other explanations which have been suggested seem less satisfactory). Timotheus rejoined the apostle at Corinth (Ac 18:5).

Ac 17:16-34. PAUL AT ATHENS.

16, 17. wholly given to idolatry--"covered with idols"; meaning the city, not the inhabitants. Petronius, a contemporary writer at Nero's court, says satirically that it was easier to find a god at Athens than a man. This "stirred the spirit" of the apostle. "The first impression which the masterpieces of man's taste for art left on the mind of St. Paul was a revolting one, since all this majesty and beauty had placed itself between man and his Creator, and bound him the faster to his gods, who were not God. Upon the first contact, therefore, which the Spirit of Christ came into with the sublimest creations of human art, the judgment of the Holy Ghost--through which they have all to pass--is set up as "the strait gate," and this must remain the correct standard for ever" [BAUMGARTEN].

17. Therefore disputed--or, discussed.

he in the synagogue with the Jews--The sense is not, "Therefore went he to the Jews," because the Gentile Athenians were steeped in idolatry; but, "Therefore set he himself to lift up his voice to the idol city, but, as his manner was, he began with the Jews."

and with the devout persons--Gentile proselytes. After that,

in the market--the *Agora*, or place of public concourse.

daily with them that met with him--or "came in his way."

18-21. certain . . . of the Epicureans--a well-known school of *atheistic materialists*, who taught that pleasure was the chief end of human existence; a principle which the more rational interpreted in a refined sense, while the sensual explained it in its coarser meaning.

and of the Stoics--a celebrated school of *severe and lofty pantheists*, whose principle was that the universe was under the law of an iron necessity, the spirit of which was what is called the Deity: and that a passionless conformity of the human will to this law, unmoved by all external circumstances and changes, is the perfection of virtue. While therefore the Stoical was in itself superior to the Epicurean system, both were alike hostile to the Gospel. "The two enemies it has ever had to contend with are the two ruling principles of the Epicureans and Stoics--*Pleasure and Pride*" [HOWSON].

What will this babler say?--The word, which means "a picker-up of seeds," bird-like, is applied to a gatherer and retailer of scraps of knowledge, a prater; a general term of contempt for any pretended teacher.

a setter forth of strange gods--"demons," but in the Greek (not Jewish) sense of "*objects of worship*."

because he preached Jesus and the resurrection--Not as if they thought he made these to be two divinities: the strange gods were *Jehovah* and *the Risen Saviour*, ordained to judge the world.

19. they took him, and brought him to Areopagus--"the hill where the most awful court of judicature had sat from time immemorial to pass sentence on the greatest criminals, and to decide on the most solemn questions connected with religion. No place in Athens was so suitable for a discourse on the mysteries of religion" [HOWSON]. The apostle, however, was not here on his *trial*, but to expound more fully what he had thrown out in broken conversations in

the Agora.

21. all the Athenians . . . spent their time in nothing else but to tell or hear some new thing--literally, "newer thing," as if what was new becoming presently stale, they craved something still more new [BENGEL]. This lively description of the Athenian character is abundantly attested by their own writers.

22. Then Paul stood . . . and said--more graphically, "standing in the midst of Mars' hill, said." This prefatory allusion to the position he occupied shows the writer's wish to bring the situation vividly before us [BAUMGARTEN].

I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious--rather (with most modern interpreters and the ancient Greek ones), "in all respects extremely reverential" or "much given to religious worship," a conciliatory and commendatory introduction, founded on his own observation of the symbols of devotion with which their city was covered, and from which all Greek writers, as well as the apostle, inferred the exemplary religiousness of the Athenians. (The authorized translation would imply that only *too much* superstition was wrong, and represents the apostle as repelling his hearers in the very first sentence; whereas the whole discourse is studiously courteous).

23. as I passed by and beheld your devotions--rather, "the objects of your devotion," referring, as is plain from the next words, to their works of art consecrated to religion.

I found an altar . . . To the--or, "an"

unknown god--erected, probably, to commemorate some divine interposition, which they were unable to ascribe to any known deity. That there were such altars, Greek writers attest; and on this the apostle skilfully fastens at the outset, as the text of his discourse, taking it as evidence of that dimness of religious conception which, in virtue of his better light, he was prepared to dissipate.

Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship--rather, "Whom, therefore, knowing Him not, ye worship," alluding to "The Unknown God."

him declare--announce.

I unto you--*This is like none of his previous discourses, save that to the idolaters of Lycaonia (Ac 14:15-17).* His subject is not, as in the synagogues, the Messiahship of Jesus, but THE LIVING GOD, in opposition to the materialistic and pantheistic polytheism of Greece, which subverted all true religion. Nor does he come with *speculation* on this *profound subject*--of which they had had enough from others--but an authoritative "announcement" of Him after whom they were groping not giving Him any name, however, nor even naming the Saviour Himself but unfolding the true character of both as they were able to receive it.

24, 25. God that made the world and all . . . therein--The most profound philosophers of Greece were unable to conceive any real distinction between God and the universe. Thick darkness, therefore, behooved to rest on all their religious conceptions. To dissipate this, the apostle sets out with a sharp statement of the fact of *creation* as the central principle of all true religion--not less needed now, against the transcendental idealism of our day.

seeing he is Lord--or Sovereign.

of heaven and earth--holding in free and absolute subjection all the works of His hands; presiding in august royalty over them, as well as pervading them all as the principle of their being. How different this from the blind Force or Fate to which all creatures were regarded as in bondage!

dwelleth not in temples made with hands--This thought, so familiar to Jewish ears (1Ki

8:27; Isa 66:1, 2; Ac 7:48), and so elementary to Christians, would serve only more sharply to define to his heathen audience the spirituality of that living, personal God, whom he "announced" to them.

25. Neither is worshipped with--ministered unto, served by **men's hands, as though he needed anything--**No less familiar as this thought also is to us, even from the earliest times of the Old Testament (Job 35:6, 8; Ps 16:2, 3; 50:12-14; Isa 40:14-18), it would pour a flood of light upon any candid heathen mind that heard it.

seeing he--He Himself.

giveth to all life, and breath, and all things--The Giver of all cannot surely be dependent for aught upon the receivers of all (1Ch 29:14). This is the culminating point of a pure Theism.

26, 27. and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth--Holding with the Old Testament teaching, that in the blood is the life (Ge 9:4; Le 17:11; De 12:23), the apostle sees this life stream of the whole human race to be one, flowing from one source [BAUMGARTEN].

and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation--The apostle here opposes both Stoical Fate and Epicurean Chance, ascribing the *periods* and *localities* in which men and nations flourish to the sovereign will and prearrangements of a living God.

27. That they should seek the Lord--That is the high end of all these arrangements of Divine Power, Wisdom, and Love.

if haply they might feel after him--as men groping their way in the dark.

and find him--a lively picture of the murky atmosphere of Natural Religion.

though he be not far from every one of us--The difficulty of finding God outside the pale of revealed religion lies not in His distance from us, but in our distance from Him through the blinding effect of sin.

28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being--(or, more briefly, "exist").--This means, not merely, "Without Him we have no *life*, nor that *motion* which every inanimate nature displays, nor even *existence* itself" [MEYER], but that God is the living, immanent Principle of all these in men.

as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring--the first half of the fifth line, word for word, of an astronomical poem of Aratus, a Greek countryman of the apostle, and his predecessor by about three centuries. But, as he hints, the same sentiment is to be found in other Greek poets. They meant it doubtless in a *pantheistic* sense; but the truth which it expresses the apostle turns to his own purpose--to teach a pure, personal, spiritual Theism. (Probably during his quiet retreat at Tarsus. Ac 9:30, revolving his special vocation to the Gentiles he gave himself to the study of so much Greek literature as might be turned to Christian account in his future work. Hence this and his other quotations from the Greek poets, 1Co 15:33; Tit 1:12).

29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think--*The courtesy of this language is worthy of notice.*

that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device--("graven by the art or device of man"). One can hardly doubt that the apostle would here point to those matchless monuments of the plastic art, in gold and silver and costliest stone, which lay so profusely beneath and around him. The more intelligent pagan Greeks no more pretended that

these sculptured gods and goddesses were real deities, or even their actual likenesses, than Romanist Christians do their images; and Paul doubtless knew this; yet here we find him condemning all such efforts visibly to represent the invisible God. How shamefully inexcusable then are the Greek and Roman churches in paganizing the worship of the Christian Church by the encouragement of pictures and images in religious service! (In the eighth century, the second council of Nicea decreed that the image of God was as proper an object of worship as God Himself).

30. the times of this ignorance God winked at--literally (and far better), "overlooked," that is, bore with, without interposing to punish it, otherwise than suffering the debasing tendency of such worship to develop itself (compare Ac 14:16, and see on [Ro 1:24](#), &c.).

but now--that a new light was risen upon the world.

commandeth--"That duty--all along lying upon man estranged from his Creator, but hitherto only silently recommending itself and little felt--is now peremptory."

all men every where to repent--(compare Col 1:6, 23; Tit 1:11) --a tacit allusion to the narrow precincts of favored Judaism, within which immediate and entire repentance was ever urged. The word "repentance" is here used (as in Lu 13:3, 5; 15:10) in its most comprehensive sense of "repentance unto life."

31. Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world--Such language beyond doubt teaches that the judgment will, in its essence, be a solemn judicial assize held upon all mankind *at once*. "Aptly is this uttered on the Areopagus, the seat of judgment" [BENGE].

by that man whom he hath ordained--compare Joh 5:22, 23, 27; Ac 10:42.

whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead--the most patent evidence to mankind at large of the judicial authority with which the Risen One is clothed.

32-34. when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked--As the Greek religion was but the glorification of the present life, by the worship of all its most beautiful forms, the Resurrection, which presupposes the vanity of the present life, and is nothing but life out of the death of all that sin has blighted, could have no charm for the true Greek. It gave the death blow to his fundamental and most cherished ideas; nor until these were seen to be false and fatal could the Resurrection, and the Gospel of which it was a primary doctrine, seem otherwise than ridiculous.

others said, We will hear thee again of this--"an idle compliment to Paul and an opiate to their consciences, such as we often meet with in our own day. They probably, like Felix, feared to hear more, lest they should be constrained to believe unwelcome truths" (Ac 24:25; and compare Mt 13:15) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

33. So Paul departed--Whether he would have opened, to any extent, the Gospel scheme in this address, if he had not been interrupted, or whether he reserved this for exposition afterwards to earnest inquirers, we cannot tell. Only the speech is not to be judged of as quite complete.

34. Howbeit certain men clave unto him--Instead of mocking or politely waiving the subject, having listened eagerly, they joined themselves to the apostle for further instruction; and so they "believed."

Dionysius the Areopagite--a member of that august tribunal. Ancient tradition says he was placed by the apostle over the little flock at Athens. "Certainly the number of converts there and

of men fit for office in the Church was not so great that there could be much choice" [OLSHAUSEN].

a woman named Damaris--not certainly one of the apostle's audience on the Areopagus, but won to the faith either before or after. Nothing else is known of her. Of any further labors of the apostle at Athens, and how long he stayed, we are not informed. Certainly he was not driven away. But "it is a serious and instructive fact that the mercantile populations of Thessalonica and Corinth received the message of God with greater readiness than the highly educated and polished Athenians. Two letters to the Thessalonians, and two to the Corinthians, remain to attest the flourishing state of those churches. But we possess no letter written by Paul to the Athenians; and we do not read that he was ever in Athens again" [HOWSON].

CHAPTER 18

Ac 18:1-22. PAUL'S ARRIVAL AND LABORS AT CORINTH, WHERE HE IS REJOINED BY SILAS AND TIMOTHY, AND, UNDER DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT, MAKES A LONG STAY--AT LENGTH, RETRACING HIS STEPS, BY EPHEBUS, CÆSAREA, AND JERUSALEM, HE RETURNS FOR THE LAST TIME TO ANTIOCH, THUS COMPLETING HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

1-4. came to Corinth--rebuilt by Julius Cæsar on the isthmus between the Ægean and Ionian Seas; the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, and the residence of the proconsul; a large and populous mercantile city, and the center of commerce alike for East and West; having a considerable Jewish population, larger, probably, at this time than usual, owing to the banishment of the Jews from Rome by Claudius Cæsar (Ac 18:2). Such a city was a noble field for the Gospel, which, once established there, would naturally diffuse itself far and wide.

2. a Jew . . . Aquila . . . with his wife Priscilla--From these *Latin* names one would conclude that they had resided so long in Rome as to lose their Jewish family names.

born in Pontus--the most easterly province of Asia Minor, stretching along the southern shore of the Black Sea. From this province there were Jews at Jerusalem on the great Pentecost (Ac 2:9), and the Christians of it are included among "the strangers of the dispersion," to whom Peter addressed his first Epistle (1Pe 1:1). Whether this couple were converted before Paul made their acquaintance, commentators are much divided. They may have brought their Christianity with them from Rome [OLSHAUSEN], or Paul may have been drawn to them merely by like occupation, and, lodging with them, have been the instrument of their conversion [MEYER]. They appear to have been in good circumstances, and after travelling much, to have eventually settled at Ephesus. The Christian friendship now first formed continued warm and unbroken, and the highest testimony is once and again borne to them by the apostle.

Claudius, &c.--This edict is almost certainly that mentioned by SÜETONIUS, in his life of this emperor [*Lives of the Cæsars*, "Claudius," 25].

3. tentmakers--manufacturers, probably, of those hair-cloth tents supplied by the goats of the apostle's native province, and hence, as sold in the markets of the Levant, called *cilicium*. Every Jewish youth, whatever the pecuniary circumstances of his parents, was taught some trade (see on [Lu 2:42](#)), and Paul made it a point of conscience to work at that which he had probably been bred to, partly that he might not be burdensome to the churches, and partly that his motives as a minister of Christ might not be liable to misconstruction. To both these he makes frequent reference in his Epistles.

4. the Greeks--that is, Gentile proselytes; for to the heathen, as usual, he only turned when rejected by the Jews (Ac 18:6).

5, 6. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia--that is, from Thessalonica, whither Silas had probably accompanied Timothy when sent back from Athens (see on [Ac 17:15](#)).

Paul was pressed in the spirit--rather (according to what is certainly the true reading) "was pressed with the word"; expressing not only his zeal and assiduity in preaching it, but some inward *pressure* which at this time he experienced in the work (to convey which more clearly was probably the origin of the common reading). What that pressure was we happen to know, with singular minuteness and vividness of description, from the apostle himself, in his first Epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians (1Co 2:1-5; 1Th 3:1-10). He had come away from Athens, as he remained there, in a depressed and anxious state of mind, having there met, for the first time, with unwilling Gentile ears. He continued, apparently for some time, laboring alone in the synagogue of Corinth, full of deep and anxious solicitude for his Thessalonian converts. His early ministry at Corinth was colored by these feelings. Himself deeply humbled, his power as a preacher was more than ever felt to lie in demonstration of the Spirit. At length Silas and Timotheus arrived with exhilarating tidings of the faith and love of his Thessalonian children, and of their earnest longing again to see their father in Christ; bringing with them also, in token of their love and duty, a pecuniary contribution for the supply of his wants. This seems to have so lifted him as to put new life and vigor into his ministry. *He now wrote his FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS*, in which the "pressure" which resulted from all this strikingly appears. (See [Introduction](#) to First Thessalonians). Such emotions are known only to the ministers of Christ, and, even of them, only to such as "travail in birth until Christ be formed in" their hearers.

6. Your blood be upon your own heads, &c.--See Eze 33:4, 9.
from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles--Compare Ac 13:46.

7, 8. he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus--not changing his lodging, as if Aquila and Priscilla up to this time were with the opponents of the apostle [ALFORD], but merely ceasing any more to testify in the synagogue, and henceforth carrying on his labors in this house of Justus, which "joining hard to the synagogue," would be easily accessible to such of its worshippers as were still open to light. Justus, too, being probably a proselyte, would more easily draw a mixed audience than the synagogue. From this time forth conversions rapidly increased.

8. Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house--an event felt to be so important that the apostle deviated from his usual practice (1Co 1:14-16) and baptized him, as well as Caius (Gaius) and the household of Stephanas, with his own hand [HOWSON].

many of the Corinthians . . . believed and were baptized--The beginning of the church gathered there.

9-11. Then spake the Lord to Paul . . . by a vision, Be not afraid . . . no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, &c.--From this it would seem that these signal successes were stirring up the wrath of the unbelieving Jews, and probably the apostle feared being driven by violence, as before, from this scene of such promising labor. He is reassured, however, from above.

10. I have much people in this city--"whom in virtue of their election to eternal life He already designates as His" (compare Ac 13:48) [BAUMGARTEN].

11. continued there a year and six months--the whole period of this stay at Corinth, and not merely up to what is next recorded. *During some part of this period he wrote his SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.* (See [Introduction](#) to Second Thessalonians.)

12-17. when Gallio was the deputy--"the proconsul." See on [Ac 13:7](#). He was brother to the celebrated philosopher SENECA, the tutor of Nero, who passed sentence of death on both.

13. contrary to the--Jewish law--probably in not requiring the Gentiles to be circumcised.

14. If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness--any offense punishable by the magistrate.

15. if it be a question of words and names, and of your law . . . I will be no judge, &c.--in this only laying down the proper limits of his office.

16. drave them, &c.--annoyed at such a case.

17. all the Greeks--the Gentile spectators.

took Sosthenes--perhaps the successor of Crispus, and certainly the head of the accusing party. It is very improbable that this was the same Sosthenes as the apostle afterwards calls "his brother" (1Co 1:1).

and beat him before the judgment-seat--under the very eye of the judge.

And Gallio cared for none of those things--nothing loath, perhaps, to see these turbulent Jews, for whom probably he felt contempt, themselves getting what they hoped to inflict on another, and indifferent to whatever was beyond the range of his office and case. His brother eulogizes his loving and lovable manners. Religious indifference, under the influence of an easy and amiable temper, reappears from age to age.

18. Paul . . . tarried . . . yet a good while--During his long residence at Corinth, Paul planted other churches in Achaia (2Co 1:1).

then took . . . leave of the brethren, and sailed . . . into--rather, "for"

Syria--to Antioch, the starting-point of all the missions to the Gentiles, which he feels to be for the present concluded.

with him Priscilla and Aquila--In this order the names also occur in Ac 18:26 (according to the true reading); compare Ro 16:3; 2Ti 4:19, which seem to imply that the wife was the more prominent and helpful to the Church. Silas and Timotheus doubtless accompanied the apostle, as also Erastus, Gaius, and Aristarchus (Ac 19:22, 29). Of Silas, as Paul's associate, we read no more. His name occurs last in connection with Peter and the churches of Asia Minor [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

having shorn his head in Cenchrea--the eastern harbor of Corinth, about ten miles distant, where a church had been formed (Ro 16:1).

for he--Paul.

had a vow--That it was the Nazarite vow (Nu 6:1-27) is not likely. It was probably one made in one of his seasons of difficulty or danger, in prosecution of which he cuts off his hair

and hastens to Jerusalem to offer the requisite sacrifice within the prescribed thirty days [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 2.15.1]. This explains the haste with which he leaves Ephesus (Ac 18:21), and the subsequent observance, on the recommendation of the brethren, of a similar vow (Ac 21:24). This one at Corinth was voluntary, and shows that even in heathen countries he systematically studied the prejudices of his Jewish brethren.

19. he came to Ephesus--the capital of the Roman province of Asia. (See [Introduction](#) to Ephesians). It was a sail, right across from the west to the east side of the Ægean Sea, of some eight or ten days, with a fair wind.

left them there--Aquila and Priscilla.

but he himself entered into the synagogue--merely taking advantage of the vessel putting in there.

and reasoned with the Jews--the *tense* here not being the usual one denoting *continuous* action (as in Ac 17:2; 18:4), but that expressing a *transient act*. He had been forbidden to preach the word in Asia (Ac 16:6), but he would not consider that as precluding this passing exercise of his ministry when Providence brought him to its capital; nor did it follow that the prohibition was still in force.

20. when they desired him to tarry--The Jews seldom rose against the Gospel till the successful preaching of it stirred them up, and there was no time for that here.

21. I must . . . keep this feast--probably Pentecost, presenting a noble opportunity of preaching the Gospel.

but I will return--the fulfilment of which promise is recorded in Ac 19:1.

22. And when he had landed at Cæsarea--where he left the vessel.

and gone up--that is, to Jerusalem.

and saluted the church--In these few words does the historian despatch the apostle's FOURTH VISIT TO JERUSALEM after his conversion. The expression "going *up*" is invariably used of a journey to the metropolis; and thence he naturally "went *down* to Antioch." Perhaps the vessel reached too late for the feast, as he seems to have done nothing in Jerusalem beyond "saluting the Church," and privately offering the sacrifice with which his vow (Ac 18:18) would conclude. It is left to be understood, as on his arrival from his first missionary tour, that "when he was come, and had gathered the church together, he rehearsed all that God had done with him" (Ac 14:27) on this his *second missionary journey*.

Ac 18:23-21:16. PAUL'S THIRD AND LAST MISSIONARY JOURNEY--HE VISITS THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA AND PHRYGIA.

23. And after he had spent some time there--but probably not long.

he departed--little thinking, probably, he was never more to return to Antioch.

went over all . . . Galatia and Phrygia in order--visiting the several churches in succession. See on [Ac 16:6](#). Galatia is mentioned first here, as he would come to it first from Antioch. It was on this visitation that he ordained the weekly collection (1Co 16:1, 2), which has been since adopted generally, and converted into a public usage throughout Christendom. Timotheus and Erastus, Gaius and Aristarchus, appear to have accompanied him on this journey (Ac 19:22, 29; 2Co 1:1), and from Second Corinthians we may presume, Titus also. The details of this visit, as of the former (Ac 16:6), are not given.

Ac 18:24-28. EPISODE CONCERNING APOLLOS AT EPHESUS AND IN ACHAIA.

This is one of the most interesting and suggestive incidental narratives in this precious history.

24, 25. a . . . Jew named Apollos--a contraction from Apollonius.

born at Alexandria--the celebrated city of Egypt on the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean, called after its founder, Alexander the Great. Nowhere was there such a fusion of Greek, Jewish, and Oriental peculiarities, and an intelligent Jew educated in that city could hardly fail to manifest all these elements in his mental character.

eloquent--turning his Alexandrian culture to high account.

and mighty in the scriptures--his eloquence enabling him to express clearly and enforce skilfully what, as a Jew, he had gathered from a diligent study of the Old Testament Scriptures.

came to Ephesus--on what errand is not known.

25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord . . . knowing only the baptism of John--He was instructed, probably, by some disciple of the Baptist, in the whole circle of John's teaching concerning Jesus, but no more: he had yet to learn the new light which the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost had thrown upon the Redeemer's death and resurrection; as appears from Ac 19:2, 3.

being fervent in the spirit--His heart warm, and conscious, probably, of his gifts and attainments, he burned to impart to others the truth he had himself received.

he spake and taught diligently--rather, "accurately" (it is the same word as is rendered "perfectly" in Ac 18:26).

26. speak boldly in the synagogue, whom when Aquila and Priscilla heard--joying to observe the extent of Scripture knowledge and evangelical truth which he displayed, and the fervency, courage, and eloquence with which he preached the truth.

they took him unto them--privately.

and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly--opening up those truths, to him as yet unknown, on which the Spirit had shed such glorious light. (In what appears to be the true reading of this verse, Priscilla is put before Aquila, as in Ac 18:18 [see on [Ac 18:18](#)]; she being probably the more intelligent and devoted of the two). One cannot but observe how providential it was that this couple should have been left at Ephesus when Paul sailed thence for Syria; and no doubt it was chiefly to pave the way for the better understanding of this episode that the fact is expressly mentioned by the historian in Ac 18:19. We see here also an example of not only *lay* agency (as it is called), but *female* agency of the highest kind and with the most admirable fruit. Nor can one help admiring the humility and teachableness of so gifted a teacher in sitting at the feet of a Christian woman and her husband.

27, 28. And when he was disposed--"minded," "resolved."

to pass into Achaia--of which Corinth, on the opposite coast (see on [Ac 18:1](#)), was the capital; there to proclaim that Gospel which he now more fully comprehended.

the brethren--We had not before heard of such gathered at Ephesus. But the desire of the Jews to whom Paul preached to retain him among them for some time (Ac 18:20), and his promise to return to them (Ac 18:21), seem to indicate some drawing towards the Gospel, which, no doubt, the zealous private labors of Priscilla and Aquila would ripen into discipleship.

wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him--a beautiful specimen of "letters of

recommendation" (as Ac 15:23, 25-27, and see 2Co 3:1); by which, as well as by interchange of deputations, &c., the early churches maintained active Christian fellowship with each other.

when he was come, helped them much--was a great acquisition to the Achaian brethren.

which believed through grace--one of those incidental expressions which show that *faith's being a production of God's grace in the heart* was so current and recognized a truth that it was taken for granted, as a necessary consequence of the general system of grace, rather than expressly insisted on. (It is against the natural order of the words to read them, as BENGEL, MEYER, and others, do, "helped through grace those who believed").

28. For he mightily convinced the Jews--The word is very strong: "stoutly bore them down in argument," "vigorously argued them down," and the *tense* in that he *continued* to do it, or that this was the characteristic of his ministry.

showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ--Rather, "that the Christ (or Messiah) was Jesus." This expression, when compared with Ac 18:25, seems to imply a richer testimony than with his partial knowledge he was at first able to bear; and the power with which he bore down all opposition in argument is that which made him such an acquisition to the brethren. Thus his ministry would be as good as another visitation to the Achaian churches by the apostle himself (see 1Co 3:6) and the more as, in so far as he was indebted for it to Priscilla and Aquila, it would have a decidedly *Pauline* cast.

CHAPTER 19

Ac 19:1-41. SIGNAL SUCCESS OF PAUL AT EPHESUS.

1-3. while Apollos was at Corinth--where his ministry was so powerful that a formidable party in the Church of that city gloried in his type of preaching in preference to Paul's (1Co 1:12; 3:4), no doubt from the marked infusion of Greek philosophic culture which distinguished it, and which the apostle studiously avoided (1Co 2:1-5).

Paul having passed through the upper coasts--"parts," the interior of Asia Minor, which, with reference to the seacoast, was elevated.

came to Ephesus--thus fulfilling his promise (Ac 18:21).

finding certain disciples--in the same stage of Christian knowledge as Apollos at first, newly arrived, probably, and having had no communication as yet with the church at Ephesus.

2. Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?--rather, "Received ye the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" implying, certainly, that the one did not of necessity carry the other along with it (see on [Ac 8:14-17](#)). Why this question was asked, we cannot tell; but it was probably in consequence of something that passed between them from which the apostle was led to suspect the imperfection of their light.

We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost--This cannot be the meaning, since the personality and office of the Holy Ghost, in connection with Christ, formed an especial subject of the Baptist's teaching. Literally, the words are, "We did not even hear whether the Holy Ghost was (given)"; meaning, at the time of their baptism. That the word "given" is the right supplement, as in Joh 7:39, seems plain from the nature of the case.

4. Then said Paul, John . . . baptized with the baptism of repentance--water unto repentance.

saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him--

that is, who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. The point of contrast is not between John and Christ personally, but between the *water* baptism of John unto *repentance*, and the promised baptism of *the Spirit* from the hands of his coming Master unto *new life*. As to all the facts, or at least the significancy, of this baptism, which made the whole life and work of Christ another thing from what it was conceived to be before it was vouchsafed, these simple disciples were unenlightened.

5-7. When they heard this--not the mere words reported in Ac 19:4, but *the subject expounded* according to the tenor of those words.

they were baptized--not however by Paul himself (1Co 1:14).

in the name of the Lord Jesus--into the whole fulness of the new economy, as now opened up to their believing minds.

6. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them . . . they spake with tongues, &c.--See on [Ac 10:44,45](#).

8-10. he went into the synagogue and spake boldly for . . . three months, &c.--See on [Ac 17:2, 3](#).

9. when divers--"some."

were hardened, &c.--implying that others, probably a large number, believed.

spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed--from the synagogue, as at Corinth (Ac 18:7).

and separated the disciples--withdrawing to a separate place of meeting, for the sake both of the converts already made, and the unsophisticated multitude.

disputing--"discoursing" or "discussing."

daily in the school--or lecture hall.

of one Tyrannus--probably a converted teacher of rhetoric or philosophy.

10. this continued . . . two years--in addition to the former three months. See on [Ac 20:31](#). But during some part of this period he must have paid a second unrecorded visit to Corinth, since the one next recorded (see on [Ac 20:2, 3](#)) is twice called his *third* visit (2Co 12:14; 13:1). See on [2Co 1:15, 16](#), which might seem inconsistent with this. The passage across was quite a short one (see on [Ac 18:19](#)) --Towards the close of this long stay at Ephesus, as we learn from 1Co 16:8, he wrote his FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS; also (though on this opinions are divided) the EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS. (See [Introduction](#) to First Corinthians, and [Introduction](#) to Galatians). And just as at Corinth his greatest success was after his withdrawal to a separate place of meeting (Ac 18:7-10), so at Ephesus.

so that all they which dwelt in--the Roman province of

Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks--This is the "great door and effectual opened unto him" while resident at Ephesus (1Co 16:9), which induced him to make it his headquarters for so long a period. The unwearied and varied character of his labors here are best seen in his own subsequent address to the elders of Ephesus (Ac 20:17, &c.). And thus Ephesus became the "ecclesiastical center for the entire region, as indeed it remained for a very long period" [BAUMGARTEN]. Churches arose at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis eastward, either through his own labors or those of his faithful helpers whom he sent out in different directions, Epaphras, Archippus, Philemon (Col 1:7; 4:12-17; Phm 23).

11, 12. God wrought special--no ordinary

miracles by the hands of Paul--implying that he had not been accustomed to work such.

12. So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, &c.--

Compare Ac 5:15, 16, very different from the magical acts practiced at Ephesus. "*God* wrought these miracles" merely "*by the hands of Paul*"; and the very exorcists (Ac 19:13), observing that the name of Jesus was the secret of all his miracles, hoped, by aping him in this, to be equally successful; while the result of all in the "magnifying of the Lord Jesus" (Ac 19:17) showed that in working them the apostle took care to hold up Him whom he *preached* as the source of all the miracles which he *wrought*.

13. vagabond Jews--simply, "wandering Jews," who went from place to place practicing exorcism, or the art of conjuring evil spirits to depart out of the possessed. That such a power did exist, for some time at least, seems implied in Mt 12:27. But no doubt this would breed imposture; and the present case is very different from that referred to in Lu 9:49, 50.

We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth--a striking testimony to the power of Christ's name in Paul's mouth.

14-17. seven sons of . . . Sceva . . . chief of the priests--head, possibly, of one of the twenty-four courts.

15. the evil spirit answered, Jesus I know--"recognize."

and Paul I know--"know intimately," in contrast to them, whom he altogether disowns.

but who are ye?

16. And the man in whom the evil spirit was--Mark the clear line of demarcation here between "*the evil spirit* which answered and said" and "*the man in whom the evil spirit was.*" The reality of such possessions could not be more clearly expressed.

leaped on them . . . so that they fled . . . naked and wounded--This was so appalling a testimony at once against those profane impostors and in favor of Paul and the Master whom he preached, that we wonder not that it spread to "all the Jews and Greeks at Ephesus, that fear fell on them," and that "the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

18-20. many that believed came and confessed . . . their deeds--the dupes of magicians, &c., acknowledging how shamefully they had been deluded, and how deeply they had allowed themselves to be implicated in such practices.

19. Many of them . . . which used curious arts--The word signifies things "overdone"; significantly applied to arts in which laborious but senseless incantations are practiced.

brought their books--containing the mystic formularies.

and burned them before all--The *tense*, here used graphically, expresses progress and continuance of the conflagration.

counted the price . . . and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver--about £2000 (presuming it to be the *drachma*, the current coin of the Levant, of about 10*d.* value). From their nature they would be costly, and books then bore a value above any standard we are familiar with. The scene must have been long remembered at Ephesus, as a strong proof of honest conviction on the part of the sorcerers and a striking triumph of Jesus Christ over the powers of darkness. The workers of evil were put to scorn, like Baal's priests on Carmel, and the word of

God mightily grew and prevailed [HOWSON].

21, 22. After these things were ended--completed, implying something like a natural finish to his long period of labor at Ephesus.

Paul purposed . . . when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem . . . After I have been there, I must also see Rome--Mark here the vastness of the apostle's missionary plans. They were all fulfilled, though he "saw Rome" only as a prisoner.

22. So he sent into Macedonia . . . Timotheus and Erastus--as his pioneers, in part to bring "them into remembrance of his ways which were in Christ" (1Co 4:17; 16:10), partly to convey his mind on various matters. After a brief stay he was to return (1Co 16:11). It is very unlikely that this Erastus was "the chamberlain of the city" of Corinth, of that name (Ro 16:23).

he himself stayed in--the province of

Asia for a season--that is, at Ephesus, its chief city. (Asia is mentioned in contrast with Macedonia in the previous clause).

23. the same time--of Paul's proposed departure.

about that--"the"

way--So the new religion seemed then to be designated (Ac 9:2; 22:4; 24:14).

24-26. silver shrines for--"of"

Diana--small models of the Ephesian temple and of the shrine or chapel of the goddess, or of the shrine and statue alone, which were purchased by visitors as memorials of what they had seen, and were carried about and deposited in houses as a charm. (The models of the chapel of *our Lady of Loretto*, and such like, which the Church of Rome systematically encourages, are such a palpable imitation of this heathen practice that it is no wonder it should be regarded by impartial judges as *Christianity paganized*).

gain to the craftsmen--the master-artificers.

25. Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation--rather, "with the workmen (or fabricators) of such articles," meaning the artisans employed by the master-artificers, all who manufactured any kind of memorial of the temple and its worship for sale.

26. ye see and hear--The evidences of it were to be seen, and the report of it was in everybody's mouth.

that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath . . . turned away much people--Noble testimony this to the extent of Paul's influence!

saying that they be no gods which are made with hands--The universal belief of *the people* was that they were gods, though the more intelligent regarded them only as habitations of Deity, and some, probably, as mere aids to devotion. It is exactly so in the Church of Rome.

27. So that not only this our craft is in danger . . . but, &c.--that is, "that indeed is a small matter; but there is something far worse." So the masters of the poor Pythoness put forward the *religious revolution* which Paul was attempting to effect at Philippi, as the sole cause of their zealous alarm, to cloak the self-interest which they felt to be touched by his success (Ac 16:19-21). In both cases religious zeal was the hypocritical pretext; self-interest, the real moving cause of the opposition made.

also the temple of the great goddess Diana . . . despised, and her magnificence . . .

destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth--It was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It was built about 550 B.C., of pure white marble, and though burned by a fanatic on the night of the birth of Alexander the Great, 356 B.C., was rebuilt with more splendor than before. It was four hundred twenty-five feet long by two hundred twenty broad, and the columns, one hundred twenty-seven in number, were sixty feet in height, each of them the gift of a king, and thirty-six of them enriched with ornament and color. It was constantly receiving new decorations and additional buildings, statues, and pictures by the most celebrated artists, and kindled unparalleled admiration, enthusiasm, and superstition. *Its very site is now a matter of uncertainty.* The little wooden image of Diana was as primitive and rude as its shrine was sumptuous; not like the *Greek* Diana, in the form of an imposing huntress, but quite Asiatic, in the form of a many-breasted female (emblematic of the manifold ministrations of Nature to man), terminating in a shapeless block. Like some other far-famed idols, it was believed to have fallen from heaven (Ac 19:35), and models of it were not only sold in immense numbers to private persons, but set up for worship in other cities [HOWSON]. What power must have attended the preaching of that one man by whom the death blow was felt to be given to their gigantic and witching superstition!

28, 29. Great is Diana of the Ephesians--the civic cry of a populace so proud of their temple that they refused to inscribe on it the name of Alexander the Great, though he offered them the whole spoil of his Eastern campaign if they would do it [STRABO in HOWSON].

29. having caught Gaius and Aristarchus--disappointed of Paul, as at Thessalonica (Ac 17:5, 6). They are mentioned in Ac 20:4; 27:2; Ro 16:23; 1Co 1:14; and probably 3Jo 1. If it was in the house of Aquila and Priscilla that he found an asylum (see 1Co 16:9), that would explain Ro 16:3, 4, where he says of them that "for his life they laid down their own necks" [HOWSON].

rushed . . . into the theatre--a vast pile, whose ruins are even now a wreck of immense grandeur [SIR C. FELLOWES, *Asia Minor*, 1839].

30-34. when Paul would have entered in--with noble forgetfulness of self.
unto the people--the *demos*, that is, the people met in public assembly.
the disciples suffered him not--The *tense* used implies only that they were *using their efforts* to restrain him; which might have been unavailing but for what follows.

31. And certain of the chief of Asia--literally, "And certain also of the Asiarchs." These were wealthy and distinguished citizens of the principal towns of the Asian province, chosen annually, and ten of whom were selected by the proconsul to preside over the games celebrated in the month of May (the same month which Romanism dedicates to *the Virgin*). It was an office of the highest honor and greatly coveted. Certain of these, it seems, were favorably inclined to the Gospel, at least were Paul's "friends," and knowing the passions of a mob, excited during the festivals, "sent (a message) to him desiring him not to adventure himself into the theater."

33. they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward--rather, "some of the multitude urged forward Alexander, the Jews thrusting him forward." As the blame of such a tumult would naturally be thrown upon the Jews, who were regarded by the Romans as the authors of all religious disturbances, they seem to have put forward this man to clear them of all responsibility for the riot. (BENGEL'S conjecture, that this was Alexander the coppersmith, 2Ti 4:14, has little to support it).

beckoned with the hand--compare Ac 13:16; 21:40.

would have made his defence--"offered to speak in defense."

34. But when they knew he was a Jew, all with one voice, for the space of two hours, cried out, Great is Diana, &c.--The very appearance of a Jew had the opposite effect to that intended. To prevent him obtaining a hearing, they drowned his voice in one tumultuous shout in honor of their goddess, which rose to such frantic enthusiasm as took two hours to exhaust itself.

35-41. when the town-clerk--keeper of the public archives, and a magistrate of great authority.

had appeased--"calmed."

the people--"the multitude," which the very presence of such an officer would go far to do.

he said . . . what man . . . knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana--literally, the *neocoros* or "warden." The word means "temple-sweeper"; then, "temple-guardian." Thirteen cities of Asia had an interest in the temple, but Ephesus was honored with the charge of it. (Various cities have claimed this title with reference to *the Virgin* or certain *saints*) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

and of the image which fell down from Jupiter--"from the sky" or "from heaven." See on [Ac 19:27](#). "With this we may compare various legends concerning images and pictures in the Romish Church, such as the traditional likenesses of Christ, which were said to be "not made with hands"" [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

36. Seeing that these things cannot be spoken against, &c.--Like a true legal man, he urges that such was notoriously the constitution and fixed character of the city, with which its very existence was all but bound up. Did they suppose that all this was going to be overturned by a set of itinerant orators? Ridiculous! What did they mean, then, by raising such a stir?

37. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches--"temple-plunderers," or sacrilegious persons.

nor yet blasphemers of your goddess--This is a remarkable testimony, showing that the apostle had, in preaching against idolatry, studiously avoided (as at Athens) insulting the feelings of those whom he addressed--a lesson this to missionaries and ministers in general.

38. if Demetrius have a matter--of complaint.

against any man, the law is open--rather, "the court days are being held."

and there are deputies--literally "proconsuls" (see on [Ac 13:7](#)); that is, probably, the proconsul and his council, as a court of appeal.

39. if ye inquire--"have any question."

concerning other matters--of a public nature.

40. For we--the public authorities.

are in danger of being called in question--by our superiors.

CHAPTER 20

AND GREECE--RETURNING THENCE, ON HIS ROUTE FOR JERUSALEM, HE REVISITS PHILIPPI AND TROAS--HIS MINISTRATIONS AT TROAS.

This section of the apostle's life, though peculiarly rich in material, is related with great brevity in the History. Its details must be culled from his own Epistles.

1, 2. departed--after Pentecost (1Co 16:8).

to go into Macedonia--in pursuance of the *first* part of his plan (Ac 19:21). From his Epistles we learn; (1) That, as might have been expected from its position on the coast, he revisited Troas (2Co 2:12; see on [Ac 16:8](#)). (2) That while on his former visit he appears to have done no missionary work there, he now went expressly "to preach Christ's Gospel," and found "a door opened unto him of the Lord" there, which he entered so effectually as to lay the foundation of a church there (Ac 20:6, 7). (3) That he would have remained longer there but for his uneasiness at the non-arrival of Titus, whom he had despatched to Corinth to finish the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem (1Co 16:1, 2; 2Co 8:6), but still more, that he might bring him word what effect his first Epistle to that church had produced. (He had probably arranged that they should meet at Troas). (4) That in this state of mind, afraid of something wrong, he "took leave" of the brethren at Troas, and went from thence into Macedonia.

It was, no doubt, the city of PHILIPPI that he came to (landing at Nicopolis, its seaport, see on [Ac 16:11, 12](#)), as appears by comparing 2Co 11:9, where "Macedonia" is named, with Php 4:15, where it appears that Philippi is meant. Here he found the brethren, whom he had left on his former visit in circumstances of such deep interest, a consolidated and thriving church, generous and warmly attached to their father in Christ; under the superintendence, probably, of our historian, "the beloved physician" (see on [Ac 16:40](#)). All that is said by our historian of this Macedonian visit is that "he went over those parts and gave them much exhortation." (5) Titus not having reached Philippi as soon as the apostle, "his flesh had no rest, but he was troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears" (2Co 7:5). (6) At length Titus arrived, to the joy of the apostle, the bearer of better tidings from Corinth than he had dared to expect (2Co 7:6, 7, 13), but checkered by painful intelligence of the efforts of a hostile party to undermine his apostolic reputation there (2Co 10:1-18). (7) Under the mixed feelings which this produced, he wrote--from Macedonia, and probably Philippi--*his* SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS (see [Introduction](#) to Second Corinthians); despatching Titus with it, and along with him two other unnamed deputies, expressly chosen to take up and bring their collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and to whom he bears the beautiful testimony, that they were "the glory of Christ" (2Co 8:22, 23). (8) It must have been at this time that he penetrated as far as to the confines of "Illyricum," lying along the shores of the Adriatic (Ro 15:19). He would naturally wish that his second Letter to the Corinthians should have some time to produce its proper effect ere he revisited them, and this would appear a convenient opportunity for a northwestern circuit, which would enable him to pay a passing visit to the churches at Thessalonica and Berea, though of this we have no record. On his way southward to Greece, he would preach the Gospel in the intermediate regions of Epirus, Thessaly, and Boeotia (see Ro 15:19), though of this we have no record.

2. he came into Greece--or Achaia, in pursuance of the *second* part of his plan (Ac 19:21).

3. And there abode three months--Though the province only is here mentioned, it is the city of CORINTH that is meant, as the province of "Macedonia" (Ac 20:1) meant the city of

Philippi. Some rough work he anticipated on his arrival at Corinth (2Co 10:1-8, 11; 13:1-10) though he had reason to expect satisfaction on the whole; and as we know there were other churches in Achaia besides that at Corinth (2Co 1:1; 11:10), he would have time enough to pay them all a brief visit during the three months of his stay there. This period was rendered further memorable by the despatch of *the* EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, written during his stay at Corinth and sent by "Phœbe, a servant [deaconess] of the Church at Cenchrea" (see on [Ac 18:3](#)), a lady apparently of some standing and substance, who was going thither on private business. (See on [Ro 16:1](#) and see [Introduction](#) to Romans).

And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria--He had intended to embark, probably at Cenchrea, the eastern harbor of the city, for Palestine, on his route to Jerusalem, the *third* part of his plan (Ac 19:21). But having detected some conspiracy against his life by his bitter Jewish enemies as at Damascus (Ac 9:22-25) and Jerusalem (Ac 9:29, 30), he changed his plan and determined "to return" as he had come, "through Macedonia." As he was never more to return to Corinth, so this route would bring him, for the last time, face to face with the attached disciples of *Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi*.

4, 5. there accompanied him into Asia--the province of Asia.

Sopater of Berea--The true reading, beyond doubt, is, "Sopater [the son] of Pyrrhus of Berea." Some think this mention of his father was to distinguish him from Sosipater (the same name in fuller form), mentioned in Ro 16:21. But that they were the same person seems more probable.

of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus--(See on [Ac 19:29](#)).

and Secundus--of whom nothing else is known.

Gaius of Derbe--Though the Gaius of Ac 19:29 is said to be of "Macedonia," and this one "of Derbe," there is no sufficient reason for supposing them different persons; on the contrary, Ro 16:23 (compare with 3Jo 1, where there is hardly any reason to doubt that the same Gaius is addressed) seems to show that though he spent an important part of his Christian life away from his native Derbe, he had latterly retired to some place not very far from it.

and Timotheus--not probably of Derbe, as one might suppose from this verse, but of Lystra (see on [Ac 16:1](#)); both being so associated in his early connection with the apostle that the mention of the one in the previous clause would recall the other on the mention of his name.

and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus--The latter was an Ephesian, and probably the former also. They seem to have put themselves, from this time forward, at the apostle's disposal, and to the very last been a great comfort to him (Eph 6:21, 22; Col 4:7, 8; Ac 21:29; 2Ti 4:12, 20). From the mention of the places to which each of these companions belonged, and still more the order in which they occur, we are left to conclude that they were deputies from their respective churches, charged with taking up and bringing on the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, first at Berea, next at Thessalonica, then at Philippi [HOWSON], *where we gather that our historian himself rejoined the party* (from the resumption at Ac 20:5 of the "us," dropped at Ac 16:17), by whom the Philippian collection would naturally be brought on.

5, 6. These going before--perhaps to announce and prepare for the apostle's coming.
tarried for us at Troas.

6. And we sailed . . . from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread--(that is, the Passover). This, compared with 1Co 16:8, shows that the three months spent at Corinth (Ac 20:3) were the winter months.

came . . . to Troas--for the third and last time. (See on [Ac 16:8](#) and [Ac 20:1](#)).

in the five days--As it might have been done in two days, the wind must have been adverse.

The vivid style of one now present will be here again observed.

where we abode seven days--that is, arriving on a Monday, they stayed over the Jewish sabbath and the Lord's Day following; Paul occupying himself, doubtless, in refreshing and strengthening fellowship with the brethren during the interval.

7. upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together--This, compared with 1Co 16:2, and other similar allusions, plainly indicates that the Christian observance of the day afterwards distinctly called "the Lord's Day," was already a fixed practice of the churches.

Paul preached--discoursed. The *tense* implies continued action--"kept discoursing."

8. there were many lights in the upper chamber--not a mere piece of graphic detail by an eye-witness [HACKETT, HOWSON], but mentioned, probably, as increasing the heat and contributing to drowsiness [WEBSTER and WILKINSON], as the next clause seems to show.

9. in a--"the."

window--or window seat, or recess.

fell down from the third loft--"story."

and was taken up dead--"The window projected (according to the side of the room where it was situated) either over the street or over the interior court; so that in either case he fell on the hard earth or pavement below."

10-12. Paul . . . fell on him--like Elisha (2Ki 4:34).

his life is in him--now restored; compare Mr 5:39.

11. broken bread and eaten--with what a mixture of awe and joy after such an occurrence! "And eaten"--denoting a common repast, as distinguished from the breaking of the eucharistic bread.

and talked a long while, even till break of day--How lifelike this record of dear Christian fellowship, as free and gladsome as it was solemn! (See Ec 9:7).

Ac 20:13-38. CONTINUING HIS ROUTE TO JERUSALEM HE REACHES MILETUS, WHENCE HE SENDS FOR THE ELDERS OF EPHESUS--HIS FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THEM.

13, 14. we . . . sailed--from Troas.

unto Assos; there . . . to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot--"to go by land." (See on [Mr 6:33](#)). In sailing southward from Troas to Assos, one has to round Cape Lectra, and keeping due east to run along the northern shore of the Gulf of Adramyttium, on which it lies. This is a sail of nearly forty miles; whereas by land, cutting right across, in a southeasterly direction, from sea to sea, by that excellent Roman road which then existed, the distance was scarcely more than half. The one way Paul wished his companions to take, while he himself, longing perhaps to enjoy a period of solitude, took the other, joining the ship, by appointment, at Assos.

14. came to Mitylene--the capital of the beautiful and classical island of Lesbos, which lies opposite the eastern shore of the Ægean Sea, about thirty miles south of Assos; in whose harbor they seem to have lain for the night.

15, 16. came the next day over against Chios--now Scio: one of the most beautiful of those islands between which and the coast the sail is so charming. They appear not to have touched at it.

next day we arrived--"touched" or "put in."

at Samos--another island coming quite close to the mainland, and about as far south of Chios as it is south of Lesbos.

tarried--for the night.

at Trogyllium--an anchorage on the projecting mainland, not more than a mile from the southern extremity of the island of Samos.

next day we came to Miletus--on the mainland; the ancient capital of Ionia, near the mouth of the Meander.

16. For Paul had determined to sail by--or "sail past."

Ephesus--He was right opposite to it when approaching Chios.

because he would not spend time in Asia--the Asian province of which Ephesus was the chief city.

for he hasted, if . . . possible . . . to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost--as a suitable season for giving in the great collection from all the western churches, for keeping the feast, and clearing his apostolic position with the Church, then represented in large number at Jerusalem. The words imply that there was considerable ground to doubt if he would attain this object--for more than three of the seven weeks from Passover to Pentecost had already expired--and they are inserted evidently to explain why he did not once more visit Ephesus.

17. from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church--As he was now some forty miles south of Ephesus, we might think that more time would be lost by sending thus far for the elders to come to him, than by going at once to Ephesus itself, when so near it. But if unfavorable winds and stormy weather had overtaken them, his object could not have been attained, and perhaps he was unwilling to run the risk of detention at Ephesus by the state of the church and other causes. Those here called "*elders*" or "presbyters," are in Ac 20:28 called "*bishops*." (See on [Ac 20:28](#)). The identity of presbyters and bishops in the New Testament is beyond all reasonable dispute.

18. Ye know . . . after what manner I have been with you at all seasons--For the Christian integrity and fidelity of his whole official intercourse with them he appeals to themselves.

19. Serving the Lord--Jesus.

with all humility . . . and many tears and temptations--Self-exaltation was unknown to him, and ease of mind: He "sowed in tears," from anxieties both on account of the converts from whom he "travailed in birth," and of the Jews, whose bitter hostility was perpetually plotting against him, interrupting his work and endangering his life.

20. kept back--timidly withheld from fear of consequences.

nothing that was profitable--edification directing all.

have taught you publicly, and from house to house--Did an *apostle*, whose functions were of so wide a range, not feel satisfied without *private* as well as public ministrations? How then must *pastors* feel? [BENGEL].

21. Testifying both to Jews and . . . Greeks--laboring under a common malady, and recoverable only by a common treatment.

repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ--(See on [Ac 5:31](#)). REPENTANCE, as distinguished from *faith*, is that state of the "honest and good heart" which arises from a discovery of one's contrariety to the righteous demands of the divine law. This is said to be "*toward God*," because seeing Him to be the party dishonored by sin, it feels all its acknowledgments and compunctions to be properly due to Him, as the great Lawgiver, and directs them to Him accordingly; condemning, humbling itself, and grieving before Him, looking also to Him as its only Hope of deliverance. FAITH is said to be "*toward our Lord Jesus Christ*," because in that frame of mind just described it eagerly credits the testimony of relief divinely provided in Christ, gladly embraces the overtures of reconciliation in Him, and directs all its expectations of salvation, from its first stage to its last, to Him as the one appointed Medium of all grace from God to a sinful world. Thus we have here a brief summary of all Gospel preaching. And it is easy to see why repentance is here put before faith; for the former must of necessity precede the latter. There is a repentance subsequent to faith, the fruit of felt pardon and restoration. It was this which drew the tears with which the Saviour's feet were once so copiously moistened. (Lu 7:37, 38, 47; and compare Eze 16:63). But that is not the light in which it is here presented.

22, 23. And now, behold, I--"I" is emphatic here.

bound in the spirit--compare Ac 19:21. This internal pressure, unattended with any knowledge of "what was to befall him there," was the result of that higher guidance which shaped all his movements.

23. Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, &c.--by prophetic utterances from city to city, as in Ac 11:4; 21:10, 11. Analogous premonitions of coming events are not unknown to the general method of God's providence. They would tend to season the apostle's spirit.

24. But none of these things move me, neither, &c.--In this noble expression of absolute dedication to the service of Christ and preparedness for the worst that could befall him in such a cause, note (1) his jealousy for the peculiar character of his mission, as *immediately from Christ Himself* on which all the charges against him turned; (2) the burden of that Gospel which he preached--GRACE; it was "the Gospel of the Grace of God."

25-27. I know that ye all . . . shall see my face no more--not an inspired prediction of what was certainly to be, but what the apostle, in his peculiar circumstances, fully expected. Whether, therefore, he ever did see them again, is a question to be decided purely on its own evidence.

26. I am pure from the blood of all men-- (Ac 18:6; and compare 1Sa 12:3, 5; Eze 3:17-21; 33:8, 9).

27. For I have not shunned to declare . . . all the counsel of God--God's way of salvation, and His kingdom of souls saved by His Son Jesus Christ. See Lu 7:30.

28. Take heed . . . unto yourselves--Compare 1Ti 3:2-7; 4:16; 6:11.
and to all the flock--Compare Heb 13:17. Observe here how the *personal* is put before the *pastoral* care.

over . . . which the Holy Ghost hath made you--Compare Joh 20:22, 23; Eph 4:8, 11, 12; Re 3:1. (Ac 14:23 shows that the apostle did not mean to exclude *human* ordination).

overseers--or, as the same word is *everywhere else* rendered in our version, "bishops." The *English Version* has hardly dealt fair in this case with the sacred text, in rendering the word "overseers," whereas it ought here, as in all other places, to have been "bishops," in order that the fact of elders and bishops having been originally and apostolically synonymous, might be apparent to the ordinary English reader, which now it is not [ALFORD]. The distinction between these offices cannot be certainly traced till the second century, nor was it established till late in that century.

to feed the church of God--or, "the Church of the Lord." Which of these two readings of the text is the true one, is a question which has divided the best critics. The evidence of manuscripts preponderates in favor of "THE LORD"; some of the most ancient Versions, though not all, so read; and ATHANASIUS, the great champion of the supreme Divinity of Christ early in the fourth century, says the expression "Church of God" is unknown to the Scriptures. Which reading, then, does the *internal* evidence favor? As "Church of God" occurs nine times elsewhere in Paul's writings, and "Church of the Lord" nowhere, the probability, it is said, is that he used his wonted phraseology here also. But if he did, it is extremely difficult to see how so many early transcribers should have altered it into the quite unusual phrase, "Church of the Lord"; whereas, if the apostle did use this latter expression, and the historian wrote it so accordingly, it is easy to see how transcribers might, from being so accustomed to the usual phrase, write it "Church of God." On the whole, therefore, we accept the *second* reading as most probably the true one. But see what follows.

which he hath purchased--"made His own," "acquired."

with his own blood--"His own" is emphatic: "That glorified Lord who from the right hand of power in the heavens is gathering and ruling the Church, and by His Spirit, through human agency, hath set you over it, cannot be indifferent to its welfare in your hands, seeing He hath given for it His own most precious blood, thus making it His own by the dearest of all ties." The transcendent sacredness of the Church of Christ is thus made to rest on the dignity of its Lord and the consequent preciousness of that blood which He shed for it. And as the sacrificial atoning character of Christ's death is here plainly *expressed*, so His supreme dignity is *implied* as clearly by the second reading as it is *expressed* by the first. What a motive to *pastoral fidelity* is here furnished!

29, 30. after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you--Two classes of coming enemies are here announced, the one more external to themselves, the other bred in the bosom of their own community; both were to be teachers, but the one, "grievous wolves," not sparing, that is, making a prey of the flock; the other (Ac 20:30), simply sectarian "perverters" of the truth, with the view of drawing a party after them. Perhaps the one pointed to that subtle poison of Oriental Gnosticism which we know to have very early infected the Asiatic churches; the other to such Judaizing tendencies as we know to have troubled nearly all the early churches. See the Epistles to the *Ephesians*, *Colossians*, and *Timothy*, also those to the seven churches of Asia (Re 2:1-3:22). But watchfulness against *all* that tends to injure and corrupt the Church is the duty of its pastors in every age.

31. by the space of three years--speaking in round numbers; for it was nearer three than two years.

I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears--What an appeal to be able to make! "And if this was an apostle's part, how much more a pastor's!" [BENGEL].

32-35. I commend you to God--the almighty Conservator of His people.
and to the word of his grace--that message of His pure grace (Ac 20:24) by the faith of which He keeps us (1Pe 1:5).

which--that is, God.

is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance, &c.--Observe how salvation--not only in its *initial stages* of pardon and regeneration, but in all its *subsequent stages* of "up-building," even to its *consummation* in the final inheritance--is here ascribed to the "ability" of God to bestow it, as in Ro 16:25; Eph 3:20; particularly Jude 24; and compare 2Ti 1:12, where *the same thing is ascribed to Christ*.

among all them which are sanctified--Sanctification is here viewed as the final character and condition of the heirs of glory, regarded as one saved company.

34. these hands--doubtless holding them up, as before Agrippa in chains (Ac 26:29).

have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me--See Ac 18:3; 1Co 4:12; 9:6, written from Ephesus; also 1Th 2:9.

35. that so labouring--as I have done for others as well as myself.

ye ought to support the weak to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he--"how Himself."

said, It is more blessed to give than to receive--This golden saying, snatched from oblivion, and here added to the Church's abiding treasures, is apt to beget the wish that more of what issued from those Lips which "dropped as an honeycomb," had been preserved to us. But see on [Joh 21:25](#).

36-38. he kneeled down and prayed with them all, &c.--Nothing can be more touching than these three concluding verses, leaving an indelible impression of rare ministerial fidelity and affection on the apostle's part, and of warm admiration and attachment on the part of these Ephesian presbyters. Would to God that such scenes were more frequent in the Church!

CHAPTER 21

Ac 21:1-16. SAILING FROM EPHEBUS, THEY LAND AT TYRE, AND THENCE SAILING TO PTOLEMAIS, THEY PROCEED BY LAND TO CÆSAREA AND JERUSALEM.

1. we were gotten--"torn."

from them--expressing the difficulty and pain of the parting.

with a straight course--running before the wind, as Ac 16:11.

unto Coos--Cos, an island due south from Miletus, which they would reach in about six hours, and coming close to the mainland.

the day following unto Rhodes--another island, some fifty miles to the southeast, of brilliant classic memory and beauty.

thence unto Patara--a town on the magnificent mainland of Lycia, almost due east from Rhodes. It was the seat of a celebrated oracle of Apollo.

2. And finding a ship--their former one going no farther, probably.

to Phœnicia--(See on [Ac 11:19](#)).

went abroad--One would almost think this extracted from a journal of the voyage, so graphic are its details.

3. when we . . . discovered--"sighted," as the phrase is.

Cyprus, we left it on the left hand--that is, steered southeast of it, leaving it on the northwest.

sailed into--"unto"

Syria, and landed at Tyre--the celebrated seat of maritime commerce for East and West. It might be reached from Patara in about two days.

there the ship was to unlade her burden--which gave the apostle time for what follows.

4-6. finding disciples--finding out the disciples, implying some search. They would expect such, from what is recorded, Ac 11:19. Perhaps they were not many; yet there were gifted ones among them.

who said to Paul . . . that he should not go up to Jerusalem--(See on [Ac 20:23](#); also see on [Ac 21:11-14](#)).

5. they all brought us on our way with wives and children . . . and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed--(See on [Ac 20:36](#)). Observe here that the *children* of these Tyrian disciples not only were taken along with their parents, but must have joined in this act of solemn worship. See on [Eph 6:1](#).

7. when we had finished our course--completing the voyage

from Tyre, we came--which they would do the same day.

to Ptolemais--anciently called Accho (Jud 1:31), now St. Jean d'Acre, or Acre.

and saluted the brethren, and abode, &c.--disciples gathered probably as at Tyre, on the occasion mentioned (Ac 11:19).

8-10. next day we that were of Paul's company departed--(The words "the were of Paul's company" are omitted in the best manuscripts. They were probably added as the connecting words at the head of some church lessons).

and came to Cæsarea--a run along the coast, southward, of some thirty miles.

Philip the evangelist--a term answering apparently very much to our *missionary* [HOWSON], by whose ministry such joy had been diffused over Samaria and the Ethiopian eunuch had been baptized (Ac 8:4-40).

one of the seven--deacons, who had "purchased to himself a good degree" (1Ti 3:13). He and Paul now meet for the first time, some twenty-five years after that time.

9. the same man had four daughters . . . which did prophesy--fulfilling Joe 2:28 (see Ac 2:18). This is mentioned, it would seem, merely as a high distinction divinely conferred on so devoted a servant of the Lord Jesus, and probably indicates the high tone of religion in his family.

10. tarried there many--"a good many"

days--Finding himself in good time for Pentecost at Jerusalem, he would feel it a refreshing thing to his spirit to hold Christian communion for a few days with such a family.

there came down from Judea--the news of Paul's arrival having spread.

a certain prophet . . . Agabus--no doubt the same as in Ac 11:28.

11-14. So shall the Jews bind the man that owneth this girdle, &c.--For though the Romans did it, it was at the Jews' instigation (Ac 21:33; Ac 28:17). Such dramatic methods of announcing important future events would bring the old prophets to remembrance. (Compare Isa 20:2, &c.; Jer 13:1, and Eze 5:1, &c.). This prediction and that at Tyre (Ac 21:4) were intended, not to prohibit him from going, but to put his courage to the test and when he stood the test, to deepen and mature it.

12. we and they at that place--the Cæsarean Christians.
besought him--even with tears, Ac 21:13.
not to go to Jerusalem.

13. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart--Beautiful union of manly resoluteness and womanly tenderness, alike removed from mawkishness and stoicism!

I am ready not to be bound only--"If that is all, let it come."
but to die, &c.--It was well he could add this, for he had that also to do.

15, 16. we took up our carriages--"our baggage."
and went up to Jerusalem--for the *fifth* time after his conversion, thus concluding *his third missionary tour*, which proved his *last*, so far as recorded; for though he accomplished the fourth and last part of the missionary plan sketched out (Ac 19:21) --"After I have been at Jerusalem, I must also see Rome"--it was as "a prisoner of Jesus Christ."

16. went with us . . . and brought with them--rather, "brought us to."
One Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, &c.--not an "aged" disciple, but probably "a disciple of old standing," perhaps one of the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost, or, more likely still, drawn to the Saviour Himself during His lifetime. He had come, probably, with the other Cyprians (Ac 11:20), to Antioch, "preaching the Lord Jesus unto the Grecians," and now he appears settled at Jerusalem.

Ac 21:17-40. PAUL REPORTS THE EVENTS OF HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY--IN THE TEMPLE, PURIFYING HIMSELF FROM A JEWISH VOW, HE IS SEIZED BY A MOB AND BEATEN TO THE DANGER OF HIS LIFE--THE UPROAR BECOMING UNIVERSAL, THE ROMAN COMMANDANT HAS HIM BROUGHT IN CHAINS TO THE FORTRESS, FROM THE STAIRS OF WHICH HE IS PERMITTED TO ADDRESS THE PEOPLE.

The apostle was full of anxiety about this visit to Jerusalem, from the numerous prophetic intimations of danger awaiting him, and having reason to expect the presence at this feast of the very parties from whose virulent rage he had once and again narrowly escaped with his life. Hence we find him asking the Roman Christians to wrestle with him in prayer, "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, *that he might be delivered from them that believed not in Judea,*" as well as "that his service which he had for Jerusalem (the great collection for the poor saints there) might be accepted of the saints" (Ro 15:30, 31).

17-19. the brethren received us gladly--the disciples generally, as distinguished from the official reception recorded in Ac 21:18.

18. Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present--to "report himself"

formally to the acknowledged head of the church at Jerusalem, and his associates in office. See on [Ac 15:13](#). Had any other of the apostles been in Jerusalem on that occasion, it could hardly fail to have been noted.

19. he declared particularly--in detail.

what God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry--as on previous occasions (Ac 14:27; and see Ro 15:15); no doubt referring to the insidious and systematic efforts of the Judaizing party in a number of places to shrivel the Church of Christ into a Jewish sect, and his own counter-procedure.

20-25. they glorified the Lord, &c.--constrained to justify his course, notwithstanding the Jewish complexion of the Christianity of Jerusalem.

21. they are informed . . . that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles--those residing in heathen countries.

to forsake Moses, &c.--This calumny of the unbelieving Jews would find easy credence among the Christian zealots for Judaism.

23. we have four men--Christian Jews, no doubt.
which have a vow--perhaps kept ready on purpose.

24. be at charges with them--that is, defray the expense of the sacrifices legally required of them, along with his own, which was deemed a mark of Jewish generosity.

25. touching the Gentiles . . . we have written and concluded that they observe no such things, &c.--This shows that with all their conciliation to Jewish prejudice, the Church of Jerusalem was taught to adhere to the decision of the famous council held there (Ac 15:19-29).

26. to signify--that is, announce to the priest.
the accomplishment of the days of purification, &c.--(See on [Nu 6:14-21](#)).

27-30. the Jews . . . of Asia--in all likelihood those of *Ephesus* (since they recognized Trophimus apparently as a townsman, Ac 21:29), embittered by their discomfiture (Ac 19:9, &c.).

29. Trophimus--(See on [Ac 20:4](#)).

30. took Paul, and drew him out of the temple; and forthwith the doors were shut--that the murder they meant to perpetrate might not pollute that holy place.

31. tidings came--literally, "went up," that is, to the fortress of Antonia, where the commandant resided. See on [Ac 21:32](#). This part of the narrative is particularly graphic.

32. the chief captain--"the chiliarch," or tribune of the Roman cohort, whose full number was one thousand men.

33. commanded him to be bound with two chains--(See on [Ac 12:6](#)).

34. some cried one thing--The difficulty would be so to state his crimes as to justify their proceedings to a Roman officer.

to be carried into the castle--rather, perhaps, "the barracks," or that part of the fortress of Antonia appropriated to the soldiers. The fort was built by Herod on a high rock at the northwest corner of the great temple area, and called after Mark Antony.

35, 36. Away with him--as before of his Lord (Lu 23:18; Joh 19:15).

37-40. Art not thou that Egyptian, &c.--The form of the question implies that the answer is to be in the negative, and is matter of some surprise: "Thou art not then?" &c.

38. madest an uproar, &c.--The narrative is given in JOSEPHUS [*Wars of the Jews*, 2.8.6; 13.5], though his two allusions and ours seem to refer to different periods of the rebellion.

39. a citizen of no mean city--(See on [Ac 16:37](#)).

40. stood on the stairs--"What nobler spectacle than that of Paul at this moment! There he stood, bound with two chains, ready to make his defense to the people. The Roman commander sits by, to enforce order by his presence. An enraged populace look up to him from below. Yet in the midst of so many dangers, how self-possessed is he, how tranquil!" [CHRYSOSTOM (or in his name) in HACKETT].

a great silence--the people awed at the permission given him by the commandant, and seeing him sitting as a listener.

in the Hebrew tongue--the *Syro-Chaldaic*, the vernacular tongue of the Palestine Jews since the captivity.

CHAPTER 22

Ac 22:1-30. PAUL'S DEFENSE FROM THE STAIRS OF THE FORTRESS--THE RAGE OF THE AUDIENCE BURSTING FORTH, THE COMMANDANT HAS HIM BROUGHT INTO THE FORT TO BE EXAMINED BY SCOURGING, BUT LEARNING THAT HE IS A ROMAN, HE ORDERS HIS RELEASE AND COMMANDS THE SAMHEDRIM TO TRY HIM.

2. when they heard . . . the Hebrew tongue--(See on [Ac 21:40](#)).

they kept the more silence--They could have understood him in *Greek*, and doubtless fully expected the renegade to address them in that language, but the sound of their holy mother tongue awed them into deeper silence.

3. a Jew of Tarsus, brought up in this city, at the feet--(See on [Lu 10:39](#)).

of Gamaliel--(See on [Ac 5:34](#)); a fact of great importance in the apostle's history, standing in the same relation to his future career as Moses' education in the Egyptian court to the work for which he was destined.

the perfect manner of the law of the fathers--the strictest form of traditional Judaism.
zealous--"a zealot."

toward God as ye all are this day--his own former murderous zeal against the disciples of the Lord Jesus being merely reflected in their present treatment of himself.

4. I persecuted, &c.--(See on [Ac 9:1,2](#); [Ac 9:5-7](#)).

5. the high priest--still alive.

doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders--the whole Sanhedrim.

8. Jesus of Nazareth--the Nazarene. See on [Ac 9:5](#).

9-11. they that were with me--(See on [Ac 9:7](#), &c.)

12. Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there--One would not know from this description of Ananias that he was a Christian at all, the apostles object being to hold him up as unexceptionable, even to the most rigid Jews.

13-15. The God of our fathers hath chosen thee--studiously linking the new economy upon the old, as but the sequel of it; both having one glorious Author.

14. that thou shouldest . . . see that--"the"

Just One--compare [Ac 3:14](#); [7:52](#).

hear the voice of his mouth--in order to place him on a level with the other apostles, who had "seen the [risen] Lord."

16. be baptized and wash away thy sins--This way of speaking arises from baptism being the visible seal of remission.

calling on the name of the Lord--rather, "having called," that is, *after* having done so; referring to the confession of Christ which *preceded* baptism, as [Ac 8:37](#).

17-21. it came to pass, &c.--This thrilling dialogue between the glorified Redeemer and his chosen vessel is nowhere else related.

when I was come again to Jerusalem--on the occasion mentioned in [Ac 9:26-29](#).

while I prayed in the temple--He thus calls their attention to the fact that after his conversion he kept up his connection with the temple as before.

18. get . . . quickly out of Jerusalem--compare [Ac 9:29](#).

for they will not receive thy testimony . . . And I said, Lord, they know, &c.--"Can it be, Lord, that they will resist the testimony of one whom they knew so well as among the bitterest of all against Thy disciples, and whom nothing short of resistless evidence could have turned to Thee?"

21. depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles--that is, "Enough; thy testimony is not to be thrown away upon Jerusalem; the Gentiles, afar off, are thy peculiar sphere."

22, 23. gave him audience to this word . . . then . . . Away with such a fellow from the earth, &c.--Their national prejudices lashed into fury at the mention of a mission to the Gentiles, they would speedily have done to him as they did to Stephen, but for the presence and protection of the Roman officer.

24-26. examined by scourging--according to the Roman practice.

that he might know wherefore they cried so--Paul's speech being to him in an unknown tongue, he concluded from the horror which it kindled in the vast audience that he must have been guilty of some crime.

25. Paul said to the centurion that stood by--to superintend the torture and receive the confession expected to be wrung from him.

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, &c.--See on [Ac 16:37](#).

27-29. art thou a Roman?--showing that this being of Tarsus, which he had told him before (Ac 21:39) did not necessarily imply that he was a Roman citizen.

28. With a great sum obtained I this freedom--Roman citizenship was bought and sold in the reign of Claudius, we know, at a high price: at a subsequent date, for next to nothing. But to put in a false claim to this privilege was a capital crime.

I was free born--born to it, by purchase, or in reward of services, on the part of his father or some ancestor.

29. chief captain also was afraid, &c.--See on [Ac 16:38](#).

30. commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear--that is, the Sanhedrim to be formally convened. Note here the power to order a Sanhedrim to try this case, assumed by the Roman officers and acquiesced in on their part.

CHAPTER 23

Ac 23:1-10. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE SAMHEDRIM DIVIDES THE RIVAL FACTIONS, FROM WHOSE VIOLENCE THE COMMANDANT HAS THE APOSTLE REMOVED INTO THE FORTRESS.

1. Paul, earnestly beholding the council--with a look of conscious integrity and unflinching courage, perhaps also recognizing some of his early fellow pupils.

I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day--The word has an indirect reference to the "polity" or "commonwealth of Israel," of which he would signify that he had been, and was to that hour, an honest and God-fearing member.

2. the high priest . . . commanded . . . to smite him on the mouth--a method of silencing a speaker common in the East to this day [HACKET]. But for a judge thus to treat a prisoner on his "trial," for merely prefacing his defense by a protestation of his integrity, was infamous.

3, 4. God shall smite thee--as indeed He did; for he was killed by an assassin during the Jewish war [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 2.17.9].

thou whited wall--that is, hypocrite (Mt 23:27). This epithet, however correctly describing the man, must not be defended as addressed to a judge, though the remonstrance which follows--"for sittest thou," &c.--ought to have put him to shame.

5. I wist not . . . that he was the high priest--All sorts of explanations of this have been given. The high priesthood was in a state of great confusion and constant change at this time (as appears from JOSEPHUS), and the apostle's long absence from Jerusalem, and perhaps the manner in which he was habited or the seat he occupied, with other circumstances to us unknown, may account for such a speech. But if he was thrown off his guard by an insult which touched him to the quick, "what can surpass the grace with which he recovered his self-possession, and the frankness with which he acknowledged his error? If his conduct in yielding to the momentary impulse was not that of Christ Himself under a similar provocation (Joh 18:22, 23), certainly the manner in which he atoned for his fault was *Christ-like*" [HACKET].

6-9. when Paul perceived--from the discussion which plainly had by this time arisen between the parties.

that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out--raising his voice above both parties.

I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee--The true reading seems to be, "the son of Pharisees," that is, belonging to a family who from father to son had long been such.

of the hope and resurrection of the dead--that is, not the vague hope of immortality, but the definite expectation of the resurrection.

I am called in question--By this adroit stroke, Paul engages the whole Pharisaic section of the council in his favor; the doctrine of a resurrection being common to both, though they would totally differ in their *application* of it. This was, of course, quite warrantable, and the more so as it was already evident that no impartiality in trying his cause was to be looked for from such an assembly.

8. the Sadducees say . . . there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit--(See on [Lu 20:37](#)).

the scribes . . . of the Pharisees' part . . . strove, saying, We find no evil in this man, but--as to those startling things which he brings to our ears.

if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him--referring, perhaps, to his trance in the temple, of which he had told them (Ac 22:17). They put this favorable construction upon his proceedings for no other reason than that they had found him one of their own party. They care not to inquire into the *truth* of what he alleged, over and above their opinions, but only to explain it away as something not worth raising a noise about. (The following words, "Let us not fight against God," seem not to belong to the original text, and perhaps are from Ac 5:39. In this case, either the meaning is, "If he has had some divine communication, *what of that?*" or, the conclusion of the sentence may have been drowned in the hubbub, which Ac 23:10 shows to have been intense).

10. the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled to pieces . . . commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force, &c.--This shows that the commandant was not himself present, and further, that instead of the Sanhedrim trying the cause, the proceedings quickly consisted in the one party attempting to seize the prisoner, and the other to protect him.

Ac 23:11-35. IN THE FORTRESS PAUL IS CHEERED BY A NIGHT VISION--AN INFAMOUS CONSPIRACY TO ASSASSINATE HIM IS PROVIDENTIALLY DEFEATED, AND HE IS DESPATCHED BY NIGHT WITH A LETTER FROM THE COMMANDANT TO FELIX AT CÆSAREA, BY WHOM ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE FOR A HEARING OF HIS CAUSE.

11. the night following--his heart perhaps sinking, in the solitude of his barrack ward, and thinking perhaps that all the predictions of danger at Jerusalem were now to be fulfilled in his death there.

the Lord--that is, Jesus.

stood by him . . . Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou . . . also at Rome--that is, "Thy work in Jerusalem is done, faithfully and well done; but thou art not to die here; thy purpose next to 'see Rome' (Ac 19:21) shall not be disappointed, and there also must thou bear witness of Me." As this vision was not unneeded now, so we shall find it cheering and upholding him throughout all that befell him up to his arrival there.

12-14. bound themselves under a curse . . . that they would neither eat . . . fill they had killed Paul--Compare 2Sa 3:35; 1Sa 14:24.

15. Now . . . ye with the council signify to the chief captain . . . as though, &c.--That these high ecclesiastics fell in readily with this infamous plot is clear. What will not unscrupulous and hypocritical religionists do under the mask of religion? The narrative bears unmistakable internal marks of truth.

or ever he come near--Their plan was to assassinate him on his way down from the barracks to the council. The case was critical, but He who had pledged His word to him that he should testify for Him at Rome provided unexpected means of defeating this well-laid scheme.

16-22. Paul's sister's son--(See on [Ac 9:30](#)). If he was at this time residing at Jerusalem for his education, like Paul himself, he may have got at the schools those hints of the conspiracy on which he so promptly acted.

17. Then Paul called one of the centurions--Though divinely assured of safety, he never allows this to interfere with the duty he owed to his own life and the work he had yet to do. (See on [Ac 27:22-25](#); [Ac 27:31](#)).

19. took him by the hand--This shows that he must have been quite in his boyhood, and throws a pleasing light on the kind-hearted impartiality of this officer.

21. and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee--Thus, as is so often the case with God's people, not till the last moment, when the plot was all prepared, did deliverance come.

23, 24. two hundred soldiers--a formidable guard for such an occasion; but Roman officials felt their honor concerned in the preservation of the public peace, and the danger of an attempted rescue would seem to require it. The force at Jerusalem was large enough to spare this convoy.

the third hour of the night--nine o'clock.

24. beasts . . . set Paul on--as relays, and to carry baggage.
unto Felix, the governor--the procurator. See on [Ac 24:24, 25](#).

26-30. Claudius--the Roman name he would take on purchasing his citizenship.
Lysias--his Greek family name.
the most excellent governor--an honorary title of office.

27. came I with an army--rather, "with the military."

29. perceived to be accused of questions of their law, &c.--Amidst all his difficulty in getting at the charges laid against Paul, enough, no doubt, come out to satisfy him that the whole was a question of religion, and that there was no case for a civil tribunal.

30. gave commandment to his accusers . . . to say before thee--This was not done when he wrote, but would be before the letter reached its destination.

31, 32. brought him . . . to Antipatris--nearly forty miles from Jerusalem, on the way to Cæsarea; so named by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater.

32. On the morrow they--the infantry.
left the horsemen--themselves no longer needed as a guard. The remaining distance was about twenty-five or twenty-six miles.

34, 35. asked of what province he was--the letter describing him as a Roman citizen.

35. I will hear thee--The word means, "give thee a full hearing."
to be kept in Herod's judgment hall--"prætorium," the palace built at Cæsarea by Herod, and now occupied by the Roman procurators; in one of the buildings attached to which Paul was ordered to be kept.

CHAPTER 24

Ac 24:1-27. PAUL, ACCUSED BY A PROFESSIONAL PLEADER BEFORE FELIX, MAKES HIS DEFENSE, AND IS REMANDED FOR A FURTHER HEARING. AT A PRIVATE INTERVIEW FELIX TREMBLES UNDER PAUL'S PREACHING, BUT KEEPS HIM PRISONER FOR TWO YEARS, WHEN HE WAS SUCCEEDED BY FESTUS.

1. after five days--or, on the fifth day from their departure from Jerusalem.
Ananias . . . with the elders--a deputation of the Sanhedrim.
a certain orator--one of those Roman advocates who trained themselves for the higher practice of the metropolis by practicing in the provinces, where the *Latin* language, employed in the courts, was but imperfectly understood and Roman forms were not familiar.
informed . . . against Paul--"laid information," that is, put in the charges.

2-4. Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, &c.--In this fulsome flattery there was a semblance of truth: nothing more. Felix acted with a degree of vigor and success in suppressing

lawless violence [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.8.4; confirmed by TACITUS, *Annals*, 12.54].

by thy providence--a phrase applied to the administration of the emperors.

5-8. a pestilent fellow--a plague, or pest.

and a mover of sedition among all the Jews--by exciting disturbances among them.

throughout the world--(See on [Lu 2:1](#)). This was the *first* charge; and true only in the sense explained on Ac 16:20.

a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes--the *second* charge; and true enough.

6. hath gone about--attempted.

to profane the temple--the *third* charge; and entirely false.

we . . . would have judged according to our law.

7. But . . . Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him out of our hands--a wilful falsehood and calumnious charge against a public officer. He had commanded the Sanhedrim to meet for no other purpose than to "judge him according to their law"; and only when, instead of doing so, they fell to disputing among themselves, and the prisoner was in danger of being "pulled in pieces of them" (Ac 23:10) --or as his own letter says "killed of them" (Ac 23:27) --did he rescue him, as was his duty, "by force" out of their hands.

8. Commanding his accusers to come unto thee--Here they insinuate that, instead of troubling Felix with the case, he ought to have left it to be dealt with by the Jewish tribunal; in which case his life would soon have been taken.

by examining whom--Lysias, as would seem (Ac 24:22).

thysself mayest, &c.--referring all, as if with confidence, to Felix.

9. the Jews assented, &c.--See on [Ac 23:15](#).

10. thou hast been many years a judge to this nation--He had been in this province for six or seven years, and in Galilee for a longer period. Paul uses no flattery, but simply expresses his satisfaction at having to plead before one whose long official experience of Jewish matters would enable him the better to understand and appreciate what he had to say.

11. thou mayest understand--canst easily learn.

that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem--namely, 1. The day of his arrival in Jerusalem (Ac 21:15-17); 2. The interview with James (Ac 21:18-26); 3. The assumption of the vow (Ac 21:26); 4, 5, 6. Continuance of the vow, interrupted by the arrest (Ac 21:27, &c.); 7. Arrest of Paul (Ac 21:27); 8. Paul before the Sanhedrim (Ac 22:30; 23:1-10); 9. Conspiracy of the Jews and defeat of it (Ac 23:12-24), and despatch of Paul from Jerusalem on the evening of the same day (Ac 23:23, 31); 10, 11, 12, 13. The remaining period referred to (Ac 24:1) [MEYER]. This short period is mentioned to show how unlikely it was that he should have had time to do what was charged against him.

for to worship--a very different purpose from that imputed to him.

12, 13. they neither found me . . . Neither can they prove the things, &c.--After specifying several particulars, he challenges proof of any one of the charges brought against him. So much for the charge of *sedition*.

14, 15. But this I confess to thee--in which Felix would see no crime.

that after the way they call heresy--literally, and better, "a sect."

so worship I the God of my fathers--the ancestral God. Two arguments are contained here:

(1) Our nation is divided into what they call *sects*--the sect of the Pharisees, and that of the Sadducees--all the difference between them and me is, that I belong to neither of these, but to another sect, or religious section of the nation, which from its Head they call *Nazarenes*: for this reason, and this alone, am I hated. (2) The Roman law allows every nation to worship its own deities; I claim protection under that law, worshipping the God of my ancestors, even as they, only of a different sect of the common religion.

believing all, &c.--Here, disowning all opinions at variance with the Old Testament Scriptures, he challenges for the Gospel which he preached the authority of the God of their fathers. So much for the charge of *heresy*.

15. And have hope . . . as they themselves . . . allow, that there shall be a resurrection, &c.--This appeal to the faith of his accusers shows that they were chiefly of the *Pharisees*, and that the favor of that party, to which he owed in some measure his safety at the recent council (Ac 23:6-9), had been quite momentary.

16. And herein--On this account, accordingly; that is, looking forward to that awful day (compare 2Co 5:10).

I exercise myself--The "I" here is emphatic; "Whatever they do, this is my study."

to have always a conscience void of offence, &c.--See Ac 23:1; 2Co 1:12; 2:17, &c.; that is, "These are the great principles of my life and conduct--how different from turbulence and sectarianism!"

17. Now after many--several

years absence from Jerusalem--I came to bring alms to my of Macedonia and Greece, which he had taken such pains to gather. This only allusion in the Acts to what is dwelt upon so frequently in his own Epistles (Ro 15:25, 26; 1Co 16:1-4; 2Co 8:1-4), throws a beautiful light on the truth of this History. (See PALEY'S *Horæ Paulinæ*).

and offerings--connected with his Jewish vow: see Ac 24:18.

18-21. found me purified in the temple--not polluting it, therefore, by my own presence, and neither gathering a crowd nor raising a stir: If then these Asiatic Jews have any charge to bring against me in justification of their arrest of me, why are they not here to substantiate it?

20. Or else let these . . . here say--"Or, passing from all that preceded my trial, let those of the Sanhedrim here present say if I was guilty of aught there." No doubt his hasty speech to the high priest might occur to them, but the provocation to it on his own part was more than they would be willing to recall.

21. Except . . . this one voice . . . Touching the resurrection, &c.--This would recall to the Pharisees present their own inconsistency, in befriending him then and now accusing him.

22, 23. having more perfect knowledge of that--"the"

way--(See on [Ac 19:23](#); and [Ac 24:14](#)).

When Lysias . . . shall come . . . I will how, &c.--Felix might have dismissed the case as a tissue of unsupported charges. But if from his interest in the matter he really wished to have the

presence of Lysias and others involved, a brief delay was not unworthy of him as a judge. Certainly, so far as recorded, neither Lysias nor any other parties appeared again in the case. Ac 24:23, however, seems to show that *at that time* his prepossessions in favor of Paul were strong.

24, 25. Felix . . . with his wife Drusilla . . . a Jewess--This beautiful but infamous woman was the third daughter of Herod Agrippa I, who was eaten of worms (see on [Ac 12:1](#)), and a sister of Agrippa II, before whom Paul pleaded, Ac 26:1, &c. She was "given in marriage to Azizus, king of the Emesenes, who had consented to be circumcised for the sake of the alliance. But this marriage was soon dissolved, after this manner: When Festus was procurator of Judea, he saw her, and being captivated with her beauty, persuaded her to desert her husband, transgress the laws of her country, and marry himself" [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.7.1,2]. Such was this "wife" of Felix.

he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ--Perceiving from what he had heard on the trial that the new sect which was creating such a stir was represented by its own advocates as but a particular development of the Jewish faith, he probably wished to gratify the curiosity of his Jewish wife, as well as his own, by a more particular account of it from this distinguished champion. And no doubt Paul would so far humor this desire as to present to them the great leading features of the Gospel. But from Ac 24:25 it is evident that his discourse took an entirely practical turn, suited to the life which his two auditors were notoriously leading.

25. And as he reasoned of righteousness--with reference to the *public* character of Felix.
temperance--with reference to his immoral life.

and judgment to come--when he would be called to an awful account for both.

Felix trembled--and no wonder. For, on the testimony of TACITUS, the Roman Annalist [*Annals*, 9; 12.54], he ruled with a mixture of cruelty, lust, and servility, and relying on the influence of his brother Pallas at court, he thought himself at liberty to commit every sort of crime with impunity. How noble the fidelity and courage which dared to treat of such topics in such a presence, and what withering power must have been in those appeals which made even a Felix to tremble!

Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee--Alas for Felix! This was his golden opportunity, but--*like multitudes still*--he missed it. Convenient seasons in abundance he found to call for Paul, but never again to "hear him concerning the faith in Christ," and writhe under the terrors of the wrath to come. Even in those moments of terror he had no thought of submission to the Cross or a change of life. The Word discerned the thoughts and intents of his heart, but that heart even then clung to its idols; even as Herod, who "did many things and heard John gladly," but in his best moments was enslaved to his lusts. How many Felixes have appeared from age to age!

26. He hoped . . . that money should have been given him . . . wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him--Bribery in a judge was punishable by the Roman law, but the spirit of a slave (to use the words of TACITUS) was in all his acts, and his communing with Paul"--as if he cared for either him or his message--simply added hypocrisy to meanness. The position in life of Paul's Christian visitors might beget the hope of extracting something from them for the release of their champion; but the apostle would rather lie in prison than stoop to this!

27. after two years--What a trial to this burning missionary of Christ, to suffer such a tedious period of inaction! How mysterious it would seem! But this repose would be medicine to his spirit; he would not, and could not, be entirely inactive, so long as he was able by pen and

message to communicate with the churches; and he would doubtless learn the salutary truth that even he was not essential to his Master's cause. That Luke wrote his Gospel during this period, under the apostle's superintendence, is the not unlikely conjecture of able critics.

Porcius Festus--Little is known of him. He died a few years after this [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.8.9-9.1].

came into Felix' room--He was recalled, on accusations against him by the Jews of Cæsarea, and only acquitted through the intercession of his brother at court [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.8,10].

Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure--"to earn the thanks of the Jews," which he did not.

left Paul bound-- (Ac 26:29) --which does not seem to have been till then.

CHAPTER 25

Ac 25:1-12. FESTUS, COMING TO JERUSALEM, DECLINES TO HAVE PAUL BROUGHT THITHER FOR JUDGMENT, BUT GIVES THE PARTIES A HEARING ON HIS RETURN TO CÆSAREA--ON FESTUS ASKING THE APOSTLE IF HE WOULD GO TO JERUSALEM FOR ANOTHER HEARING BEFORE HIM, HE IS CONSTRAINED IN JUSTICE TO HIS CAUSE TO APPEAL TO THE EMPEROR.

1-3. Festus . . . after three days . . . ascended . . . to Jerusalem--to make himself acquainted with the great central city of his government without delay.

2. Then the high priest--a successor of him before whom Paul had appeared (Ac 23:2). **and the chief of the Jews**--and "the whole multitude of the Jews" (Ac 25:24) clamorously. **informed him against Paul . . .**

3. desired favour--in Ac 25:15, "judgment."

against him--It would seem that they had the insolence to ask him to have the prisoner executed even without a trial (Ac 25:16).

laying wait . . . to kill him--How deep must have been their hostility, when two years after the defeat of their former attempt, they thirst as keenly as ever for his blood! Their plea for having the case tried at Jerusalem, where the alleged offense took place, was plausible enough; but from Ac 25:10 it would seem that Festus had been made acquainted with their causeless malice, and that in some way which Paul was privy to.

4-6. answered that Paul should be kept--rather, "is in custody." **at Cæsarea, and . . . himself would depart shortly thither.**

5. Let them . . . which among you are able, go down--"your leading men."

7. the Jews . . . from Jerusalem--clamorously, as at Jerusalem; see Ac 25:24.

many and grievous complaints against Paul--From his reply, and Festus' statement of the case before Agrippa, these charges seem to have been a jumble of political and religious matter which they were unable to substantiate, and vociferous cries that he was unfit to live. Paul's reply, not given in full, was probably little more than a challenge to prove any of their charges, whether political or religious.

9, 10. Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure--to ingratiate himself with them.

said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and . . . be judged . . . before me--or, "under my protection." If this was meant in earnest, it was temporizing and vacillating. But, possibly, anticipating Paul's refusal, he wished merely to avoid the odium of refusing to remove the trial to Jerusalem.

10. Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat--that is, I am already before the proper tribunal. This seems to imply that he understood Festus to propose handing him over to the Sanhedrim for judgment (and see on [Ac 25:11](#)), with a mere promise of protection from him. But from going to Jerusalem at all he was too well justified in shrinking, for there assassination had been quite recently planned against him.

to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou knowest very well--literally, "better," that is, (perhaps), better than to press such a proposal.

if there be none of these things . . . no man may deliver me unto them--The word signifies to "surrender in order to gratify" another.

11. I appeal to Cæsar--The right of appeal to the supreme power, in case of life and death, was secured by an ancient law to every Roman citizen, and continued under the empire. Had Festus shown any disposition to pronounce final judgment, Paul, strong in the consciousness of his innocence and the justice of a Roman tribunal, would not have made this appeal. But when the only other alternative offered him was to give his own consent to be transferred to the great hotbed of plots against his life, and to a tribunal of unscrupulous and bloodthirsty ecclesiastics whose vociferous cries for his death had scarcely subsided, no other course was open to him.

12. Festus--little expecting such an appeal, but bound to respect it.

having conferred with the council--his assessors in judgment, as to the admissibility of the appeal.

said, Hast thou--for "thou hast."

to Cæsar shalt thou go--as if he would add perhaps "and see if thou fare better."

Ac 25:13-27. HEROD AGRIPPA II ON A VISIT TO FESTUS, BEING CONSULTED BY HIM ON PAUL'S CASE, DESIRES TO HEAR THE APOSTLE, WHO IS ACCORDINGLY BROUGHT FORTH.

13. King Agrippa--great-grandson of Herod the Great, and Drusilla's brother (see on [Ac 24:24](#)). On his father's awful death (Ac 12:23), being thought too young (seventeen) to succeed, Judea, was attached to the province of Syria. Four years after, on the death of his uncle Herod, he was made king of the northern principalities of Chalcis, and afterwards got Batanea, Iturea, Trachonitis, Abilene, Galilee, and Perea, with the title of king. He died A.D. 100, after reigning fifty-one years.

and Bernice--his sister. She was married to her uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, on whose death she lived with her brother Agrippa--not without suspicion of incestuous intercourse, which her subsequent licentious life tended to confirm.

came to salute Festus--to pay his respects to him on his accession to the procuratorship.

14, 15. when there many--"several"

days, Festus declared Paul's cause--taking advantage of the presence of one who might be presumed to know such matters better than himself; though the lapse of "several days" ere the

subject was touched on shows that it gave Festus little trouble.

16-21. to deliver any man to die--On the word "deliver up," see on [Ac 25:11](#).

18. as I supposed--"suspected"--crimes punishable by civil law.

19. questions . . . of their own superstition--rather, "religion" (see on [Ac 17:22](#)). It cannot be supposed that Festus would use the word in any discourteous sense in addressing his Jewish guest.

one Jesus--"Thus speaks this miserable Festus of Him to whom every knee shall bow" [BENGEL].

whom Paul affirmed--"kept affirming."

to be alive--showing that the resurrection of the Crucified One had been the burden, as usual, of Paul's pleading. The insignificance of the whole affair in the eyes of Festus is manifest.

20. because I doubted of such manner of questions--The "I" is emphatic. "I," as a Roman judge, being at a loss how to deal with such matters.

21. the hearing of Augustus--the imperial title first conferred by the Roman Senate on Octavius.

22-27. I would also hear--"should like to hear."

the man myself--No doubt Paul was fight when he said, "The king knoweth of these things . . . for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner" (Ac 26:26). Hence his curiosity to see and hear the man who had raised such commotion and was remodelling to such an extent the whole Jewish life.

23. when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp--in the same city in which their father, on account of his pride, had perished, eaten up by worms [WETST].

with the chief captains--(See on [Ac 21:32](#)). JOSEPHUS [*Wars of the Jews*, 3.4.2] says that five cohorts, whose full complement was one thousand men, were stationed at Cæsarea.

principal men of the city--both Jews and Romans. "This was the most dignified and influential audience Paul had yet addressed, and the prediction (Ac 9:15) was fulfilled, though afterwards still more remarkably at Rome (Ac 27:24; 2Ti 4:16, 17) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

26. I have no certain--"definite"

thing to write my lord--Nero. "The writer's accuracy should be remarked here. It would have been . . . a mistake to apply this term ("lord") to the emperor a few years earlier. Neither Augustus nor Tiberius would let himself be so called, as implying the relation of master and slave. But it had now come (rather, "was coming") into use as one of the imperial titles" [HACKET].

CHAPTER 26

Ac 26:1-32. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIMSELF BEFORE KING AGRIPPA, WHO PRONOUNCES HIM INNOCENT, BUT CONCLUDES THAT THE APPEAL TO CÆSAR MUST

BE CARRIED OUT.

This speech, though in substance the same as that from the fortress stairs of Jerusalem (Ac 22:1-29), differs from it in being less directed to meet the charge of apostasy from the Jewish faith, and giving more enlarged views of his remarkable change and apostolic commission, and the divine support under which he was enabled to brave the hostility of his countrymen.

1-3. Agrippa said--Being a king he appears to have presided.

Paul stretched forth the hand--chained to a soldier (Ac 26:29, and see on [Ac 12:6](#)).

3. I know thee to be expert, &c.--His father was zealous for the law, and he himself had the office of president of the temple and its treasures, and the appointment of the high priest [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.1.3].

hear me patiently--The idea of "indulgently" is also conveyed.

4, 5. from my youth, which was at the first . . . at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning--plainly showing that he received his education, even from early youth, at Jerusalem. See on [Ac 22:3](#).

5. if they would--"were willing to"

testify--but this, of course, they were not, it being a strong point in his favor.

after the most straitest--"the strictest."

sect--as the Pharisees confessedly were. This was said to meet the charge, that as a Hellenistic Jew he had contracted among the heathen lax ideas of Jewish peculiarities.

6, 7. I . . . am judged for the hope of the promise made . . . to our fathers--"for believing that the promise of Messiah, the Hope of the Church (Ac 13:32; 28:20) has been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth risen from the dead."

7. Unto which promise--the fulfilment of it.

our twelve tribes-- (Jas 1:1; and see on [Lu 2:36](#)).

instantly--"intently"; see on [Ac 12:5](#).

serving God--in the sense of religious worship; on "ministered," see on [Ac 13:2](#).

day and night, hope to come--The apostle rises into language as catholic as the thought--representing his despised nation, all scattered thought it now was, as twelve great branches of one ancient stem, in all places of their dispersion offering to the God of their fathers one unbroken worship, reposing on one great "promise" made of old unto their fathers, and sustained by one "hope" of "coming" to its fulfilment; the single point of difference between him and his countrymen, and the one cause of all their virulence against him, being, that his hope had found rest in One already come, while theirs still pointed to the future.

For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews--"I am accused of Jews, O king" (so the true reading appears to be); of all quarters the most surprising for such a charge to come from. The charge of *sedition* is not so much as alluded to throughout this speech. It was indeed a mere pretext.

8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible . . . that God should raise the dead?--rather, "Why is it judged a thing incredible if God raises the dead?" the case being viewed as an

accomplished *fact*. No one dared to call in question the overwhelming evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, which proclaimed Him to be the Christ, the Son of God; the only way of getting rid of it, therefore, was to pronounce it incredible. But *why*, asks the apostle, *is it so judged?* Leaving this pregnant question to find its answer in the breasts of his audience, he now passes to his personal history.

9-15. (See on [Ac 9:1](#), &c.; and compare Ac 22:4, &c.)

16-18. But rise, &c.--Here the apostle appears to condense into one statement various sayings of his Lord to him in visions at different times, in order to present at one view the grandeur of the commission with which his Master had clothed him [ALFORD].

a minister . . . both of these things which thou hast seen--putting him on a footing with those "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" mentioned in Lu 1:2.

and of those in which I will appear to thee--referring to visions he was thereafter to be favored with; such as Ac 18:9, 10; 22:17-21; 23:11; 2Co 12:1-10, &c. (Ga 1:12).

17. Delivering thee from the people--the Jews.

and from the Gentiles--He was all along the object of Jewish malignity, and was at that moment in the hands of the Gentiles; yet he calmly reposes on his Master's assurances of deliverance from both, at the same time taking all precautions for safety and vindicating all his legal rights.

unto whom now I send thee--The emphatic "I" here denotes the authority of the Sender [BENGEL].

18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light--rather, "that they may turn" (as in Ac 26:20), that is, as the effect of their eyes being opened. The whole passage leans upon Isa 61:1 (Lu 4:18).

and from the power of Satan--Note the connection here between being "turned from darkness" and "from the power of Satan," whose whole power over men lies in keeping them *in the dark*: hence he is called "the ruler of the darkness of this world." See on [2Co 4:4](#).

that they may receive forgiveness . . . and inheritance among the sanctified by faith that is in me--*Note: Faith* is here made the instrument of salvation at once in its first stage, *forgiveness*, and its last, *admission to the home of the sanctified*; and the faith which introduces the soul to all this is emphatically declared by the glorified Redeemer to *rest upon Himself*--"FAITH, even THAT WHICH IS IN ME." And who that believes this can refrain from casting his crown before Him or resist offering Him supreme worship?

19-21. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision--This musical and elevated strain, which carries the reader along with it, and doubtless did the hearers, bespeaks the lofty region of thought and feeling to which the apostle had risen while rehearsing his Master's communications to him from heaven.

20. showed . . . to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem--omitting Arabia; because, beginning with the Jews, his object was to mention first the places where his former hatred of the name of Christ was best known: the mention of the Gentiles, so unpalatable to his audience, is reserved to the last.

repent and return to God, and do works meet for repentance--a brief description of conversion and its proper fruits, suggested, probably, by the Baptist's teaching (Lu 3:7, 8).

22, 23. having obtained help--"succor."

from God--"that [which cometh] from God."

I continue--"stand," "hold my ground."

unto this day, witnessing, &c.--that is, This life of mine, so marvellously preserved, in spite of all the plots against it, is upheld for the Gospel's sake; therefore I "witnessed," &c.

23. That Christ should suffer, &c.--The construction of this sentence implies that in regard to the question "whether the Messiah is a suffering one, and whether, rising first from the dead, he should show light to the (Jewish) people and to the Gentiles," he had only said what the prophets and Moses said should come.

24. Festus said with a loud voice--surprised and bewildered.

Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad--"is turning thy head."

The union of flowing *Greek*, deep acquaintance with the sacred writings of his nation, reference to a resurrection and other doctrines to a Roman utterly unintelligible, and, above all, lofty religious earnestness, so strange to the cultivated, cold-hearted skeptics of that day--may account for this sudden exclamation.

25, 26. I am not mad, most noble Festus, but, &c.--Can anything surpass this reply, for readiness, self-possession, calm dignity? Every word of it refuted the rude charge, though Festus, probably, did not intend to hurt the prisoner's feelings.

26. the king knoweth, &c.--(See on [Ac 26:1-3](#)).

27-29. believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest--The courage and confidence here shown proceeded from a vivid persuasion of Agrippa's knowledge of the *facts* and faith in the *predictions* which they verified; and the king's reply is the highest testimony to the correctness of these presumptions and the immense power of such bold yet courteous appeals to conscience.

28. Almost--or, "in a little time."

thou persuadest me to be a Christian--Most modern interpreters think the ordinary translation inadmissible, and take the meaning to be, "Thou thinkest to make me with little persuasion (or small trouble) a Christian"--but I am not to be so easily turned. But the apostle's *reply* can scarcely suit any but the sense given in our authorized version, which is that adopted by CHRYSOSTOM and some of the best scholars since. The objection on which so much stress is laid, that the word "Christian" was at that time only a term of contempt, has no force except on the other side; for taking it in that view, the sense is, "Thou wilt soon have me one of that despised sect."

29. I would to God, &c.--What unequalled magnanimity does this speech breathe! Only his Master ever towered above this.

not only . . . almost . . . but altogether--or, "whether soon or late," or "with little or much difficulty."

except these bonds--doubtless holding up his two chained hands (see on [Ac 12:6](#)): which in closing such a noble utterance must have had an electrical effect.

30-32. when he had thus spoken, the king rose--not over-easy, we may be sure.

32. This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar--It would seem from this that such appeals, once made, behooved to be carried out.

CHAPTER 27

Ac 27:1-44. THE VOYAGE TO ITALY--THE SHIPWRECK AND SAFE LANDING AT MALTA.

1. we should sail, &c.--The "we" here reintroduces the historian as one of the company. Not that he had left the apostle from the time when he last included himself (Ac 21:18), but the apostle was parted from him by his arrest and imprisonment, until now, when they met in the ship.

delivered Paul and certain other prisoners--State prisoners going to be tried at Rome; of which several instances are on record.

Julius--who treats the apostle throughout with such marked courtesy (Ac 27:3, 43; Ac 28:16), that it has been thought [BENGEL] he was present when Paul made his defense before Agrippa (see Ac 25:23), and was impressed with his lofty bearing.

a centurion of Augustus' band--the Augustan cohort, an honorary title given to more than one legion of the Roman army, implying, perhaps, that they acted as a bodyguard to the emperor or procurator, as occasion required.

2. a ship of--belonging to.

Adramyttium--a port on the northeast coast of the Ægean Sea. Doubtless the centurion expected to find another ship, bound for Italy, at some of the ports of Asia Minor, without having to go with this ship all the way to Adramyttium; and in this he was not disappointed. See on [Ac 27:6](#).

meaning to sail by the coasts--"places."

of Asia--a coasting vessel, which was to touch at the ports of proconsular Asia.

one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us--rather, "Aristarchus the Macedonian," &c. The word "one" should not have been introduced here by our translators, as if this name had not occurred before; for we find him seized by the Ephesian mob as a "man of Macedonia and Paul's companion in travel" (Ac 19:29) and as a "*Thessalonian*" accompanying the apostle from Ephesus on his voyage back to Palestine (Ac 20:4). Here both these places are mentioned in connection with his name. After this we find him at Rome with the apostle (Col 4:10; Phm 24).

3. next day we touched at Sidon--To reach this ancient and celebrated Mediterranean port, about seventy miles north from Cæsarea, in one day, they must have had a fair wind.

Julius courteously--(See on [Ac 27:1](#)).

gave him liberty to go to his friends--no doubt disciples, gained, it would seem, by degrees, all along the Phœnician coast since the first preaching there (see on [Ac 11:19](#) and [Ac 21:4](#)).

to refresh himself--which after his long confinement would not be unnecessary. Such small personal details are in this case extremely interesting.

4. when we had launched--"set sail."

from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary--The wind blowing from the westward, probably with a touch of the north, which was adverse, they sailed *under the lee* of Cyprus, keeping it on their *left*, and steering between it and the mainland of Phœnicia.

5. when we had sailed over the Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia--coasts with which Paul had been long familiar, the one, perhaps, from boyhood, the other from the time of his first missionary tour.

we came to Myra, a city of Lycia--a port a little east of Patara (see on [Ac 21:1](#)).

6. there . . . found a ship of Alexandria, sailing into Italy, and he put us therein--(See on [Ac 27:2](#)). As Egypt was the granary of Italy, and this vessel was laden with wheat (Ac 27:35), we need not wonder it was large enough to carry two hundred seventy-six souls, passengers and crew together (Ac 27:37). Besides, the Egyptian merchantmen, among the largest in the Mediterranean, were equal to the largest merchantmen in our day. It may seem strange that on their passage from Alexandria to Italy they should be found at a Lycian port. But even still it is not unusual to stand to the north towards Asia Minor, for the sake of the current.

7. sailed slowly many days--owing to contrary winds.
and scarce--"with difficulty."

were come over against Cnidus--a town on the promontory of the peninsula of that name, having the island of Coos (see on [Ac 21:1](#)) to the west of it. But for the contrary wind they might have made the distance from Myra (one hundred thirty miles) in one day. They would naturally have put in at Cnidus, whose larger harbor was admirable, but the strong westerly current induced them to run south.

under--the lee of

Crete--(See on [Tit 1:5](#)).

over against Salmone--the cape at the eastern extremity of the island.

8. And hardly passing it--"with difficulty coasting along it," from the same cause as before, the westerly current and head winds.

came to . . . the Fair Havens--an anchorage near the center of the south coast, and a little east of Cape Matala, the southern most point of the island.

nigh whereunto was the city Lasea--identified by the REVEREND GEORGE BROWN [SMITH, *Voyages and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, Appendix 3, Second Edition, 1856]. (To this invaluable book commentators on this chapter, and these notes, are much indebted).

9, 10. when much time was spent--since leaving Cæsarea. But for unforeseen delays they might have reached the Italian coast before the stormy season.

and when sailing--the navigation of the open sea.

was now dangerous, because the fast was now . . . past--that of the day of atonement, answering to the end of *September* and beginning of *October*, about which time the navigation is pronounced unsafe by writers of authority. Since all hope of completing the voyage during that season was abandoned, the question next was, whether they should winter at Fair Havens, or move to Port Phenice, a harbor about forty miles to the westward. Paul assisted at the consultation and strongly urged them to winter where they were.

10. Sirs, I perceive, that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, &c.--not by

any divine communication, but simply in the exercise of a good judgment aided by some experience. The event justified his decision.

11. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and owner . . . more than . . . Paul-- He would naturally think them best able to judge, and there was much to say for their opinion, as the bay at Fair Havens, being open to nearly one-half of the compass, could not be a good winter harbor.

12. Phenice--"Phenix," now called *Lutro*.

which lieth toward the southwest and northwest--If this means that it was open to the west, it would certainly not be good anchorage! It is thought therefore to mean that a *wind from* that quarter would lead into it, or that it lay in an *easterly* direction from such a wind [SMITH]. Ac 27:13 seems to confirm this.

13. when the south wind blew softly, supposing they had attained their purpose--With such a wind they had every prospect of reaching their destination in a few hours.

14, 15. a tempestuous--"typhonic"

wind--that is, like a *typhon* or tornado, causing a whirling of the clouds, owing to the meeting of opposite currents of air.

called Euroclydon--The true reading appears to be *Euro-aquilo*, or east-northeast, which answers all the effects here ascribed to it.

15. could not bear up into--"face"

the wind, we let her drift--before the gale.

16, 17. under--the lee of.

a certain--"small"

island . . . Claudia--southwest of Crete, now called *Gonzo*; about twenty-three miles to leeward.

we had much work to come by--that is, to hoist up and secure.

the boat--now become necessary. But why was this difficult? Independently of the gale, raging at the time, the boat had been towed between twenty and thirty miles after the gale sprang up, and could scarcely fail to be filled with water [SMITH].

17. undergirding the ship--that is, passing four or five turns of a cable-laid rope round the hull or frame of the ship, to enable her to resist the violence of the seas, an operation rarely resorted to in modern seamanship.

fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands--"be cast ashore" or "stranded upon the Syrtis," the *Syrtis Major*, a gulf on the African coast, southwest of Crete, the dread of mariners, owing to its dangerous shoals.

they strake--"struck"

sail--This cannot be the meaning, for to strike sail would have driven them directly towards the Syrtis. The meaning must be, "lowered the gear" (appurtenances of every kind); here, perhaps, referring to the lowering of the heavy mainyard with the sail attached to it [SMITH].

19, 20. cast out with our own hands--passengers and crew together.

the tackling of the ship--whatever they could do without that carried weight. This further

effort to lighten the ship seems to show that it was now in a *leaking* condition, as will presently appear more evident.

20. neither sun nor stars appeared in many--"several"

days--probably most of the fourteen days mentioned in Ac 27:27. This continued thickness of the atmosphere prevented their making the necessary observations of the heavenly bodies by day or by night; so that they could not tell where they were.

all hope that we should be saved was taken away--"Their exertions to subdue the leak had been unavailing; they could not tell which way to make for the nearest land, in order to run their ship ashore, the only resource for a sinking ship: but unless they did make the land, they must founder at sea. Their apprehensions, therefore, were not so much caused by the fury of the tempest, as by the state of the ship" [SMITH]. From the inferiority of ancient to modern naval architecture, leaks were sprung much more easily, and the means of repairing them were fewer than now. Hence the far greater number of shipwrecks from this cause.

21-26. But after long abstinence--(See on [Ac 27:33](#)). "The hardships which the crew endured during a gale of such continuance, and their exhaustion from laboring at the pumps and hunger, may be imagined, but are not described" [SMITH].

Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened to me, &c.--not meaning to reflect on them for the past, but to claim their confidence for what he was now to say:

23. there stood by me this night the angel of God--as in Ac 16:9; 23:11.

whose I am-- (1Co 6:19, 20).

and whom I serve--in the sense of *worship* or *religious consecration* (see on [Ac 13:2](#)).

24. saying, Fear not, Paul: thou must be brought before Cæsar and, lo, God hath given thee all . . . that sail with thee--While the crew were toiling at the pumps, Paul was wrestling in prayer, not for himself only and the cause in which he was going a prisoner to Rome, but with true magnanimity of soul for all his shipmates; and God heard him, "giving him" (remarkable expression!) all that sailed with him. "When the cheerless day came he gathered the sailors (and passengers) around him on the deck of the laboring vessel, and raising his voice above the storm" [HOWSON], reported the divine communication he had received; adding with a noble simplicity, "*for I believe God* that it shall be even as it was told me," and encouraging all on board to "be of good cheer" in the same confidence. What a contrast to this is the speech of Cæsar in similar circumstances to his pilot, bidding him keep up his spirit because he carried Cæsar and Cæsar's fortune! [PLUTARCH]. The Roman general knew no better name for the Divine Providence, by which he had been so often preserved, than *Cæsar's fortune* [HUMPHRY]. From the explicit particulars--that the ship would be lost, but not one that sailed in it, and that they "must be cast on a certain island"--one would conclude a visional representation of a total wreck, a mass of human beings struggling with the angry elements, and one and all of those whose figures and countenances had daily met his eye on deck, standing on some unknown island shore. From what follows, it would seem that Paul from this time was regarded with a deference akin to awe.

27-29. when the fourteenth night was come--from the time they left Fair Havens.

as we were driven--drifting

up and down in Adria--the *Adriatic*, that sea which lies between Greece and Italy.

about midnight the shipmen deemed--no doubt from the peculiar sound of the breakers.
that they drew near some country--"that some land was approaching them." This nautical language gives a graphic character to the narrative.

29. they cast four anchors out of the stern--The ordinary way was to cast the anchor, as now, from the *bow*: but ancient ships, built with both ends alike, were fitted with hawseholes in the stern, so that in case of need they could anchor either way. And when the fear was, as here, that they might fall on the rocks *to leeward*, and the intention was to run the ship ashore as soon as daylight enabled them to fix upon a safe spot, the very best thing they could do was to anchor by the stern [SMITH]. In stormy weather two anchors were used, and we have instances of four being employed, as here.

and wished--"anxiously" or "devoutly wished."

for day--the remark this of one present, and with all his shipmates alive to the horrors of their condition. "The ship might go down at her anchors, or the coast to leeward might be iron-bound, affording no beach on which they could land with safety. Hence their anxious longing for day, and the ungenerous but natural attempt, not peculiar to ancient times, of the seamen to save their own lives by taking to the boat" [SMITH].

30. as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship--under cover of night.

when they had let down the boat . . . as though they would . . . cast anchors out of the foreship--"bow"--rather, "carry out" anchors, to hold the ship fore as well as aft. "This could have been of no advantage in the circumstances, and as the pretext could not deceive a seaman, we must infer that the officers of the ship were parties to the unworthy attempt, which was perhaps detected by the nautical skill of St. Luke, and communicated by him to St. Paul" [SMITH].

31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers--the only parties now to be trusted, and whose own safety was now at stake.

except ye abide in the ship ye cannot be saved--The soldiers and passengers could not be expected to possess the necessary seamanship in so very critical a case. The flight of the crew, therefore, might well be regarded as certain destruction to all who remained. *In full assurance of ultimate safety, in virtue of a DIVINE pledge, to all in the ship, Paul speaks and acts throughout this whole scene in the exercise of a sound judgment as to the indispensable HUMAN conditions of safety*; and as there is no trace of any feeling of inconsistency between these two things in his mind, so even the centurion, under whose orders the soldiers acted on Paul's views, seems never to have felt perplexed by the twofold aspect, divine and human, in which the same thing presented itself to the mind of Paul. *Divine agency and human instrumentality are in all the events of life quite as much as here*. The only difference is that the one is for the most part shrouded from view, while the other is ever naked and open to the senses.

32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat--already lowered.
and let her fall off--let the boat drift away.

33-37. while day was coming on--"until it should be day"; that is, in the interval between the cutting off of the boat and the approach of day, which all were "anxiously looking for" (Ac 27:29).

Paul--now looked up to by all the passengers as the man to direct them.

besought them all to take meat--"partake of a meal."

saying, This is the fourteenth day ye have tarried--"waited for a breathing time."

having eaten nothing--that is, taken no regular meal. The impossibility of cooking, the occupation of all hands to keep down leakage, &c., sufficiently explain this, which is indeed a common occurrence in such cases.

34. I pray you to take some meat, for this is for your health, for there shall not a hair fall from . . . any of you--On this beautiful union of confidence in the divine pledge and care for the whole ship's health and safety see on [Ac 27:31](#).

35. when he had thus spoken he took bread--assuming the lead.
and gave thanks to God in presence of them all--an impressive act in such circumstances, and fitted to plant a testimony for the God he served in the breasts of all.

when he had broken it, he began to eat--not understood by the Christians in the ship as a love-feast, or celebration of the Lord's Supper, as some think, but a meal to recruit exhausted nature, which Paul shows them by his own example how a Christian partakes of.

36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat--"took food"; the first full meal since the commencement of the gale. Such courage in desperate circumstances as Paul here showed is wonderfully infectious.

38-40. when they had eaten enough, &c.--With fresh strength after the meal, they make a third and last effort to lighten the ship, not only by pumping, as before, but by throwing the whole cargo of wheat into the sea (see on [Ac 27:6](#)).

39. when it was day they knew not the land--This has been thought surprising in sailors accustomed to that sea. But the scene of the wreck is remote from the great harbor, and possesses no marked features by which it could be recognized, even by a native if he came unexpectedly upon it [SMITH], not to speak of the rain pouring in torrents (Ac 28:2), which would throw a haze over the coast even after day broke. Immediately on landing they knew where they were (Ac 28:1).

discovered a creek with a shore--Every creek of course, must have a shore; but the meaning is, a *practicable* shore, in a nautical sense, that is, one with a smooth beach, in contradistinction to a rocky coast (as Ac 27:41 shows).

into which they were minded, if . . . possible, to thrust the ship--This was their one chance of safety.

40. taken up the anchors, they committed themselves to the sea--The *Margin* is here evidently right, "cut the anchors (away), they left them in the sea."

loosed the rudder bands--Ancient ships were steered by two large paddles, one on each quarter. When anchored by the stern in a gale, it would be necessary to lift them out of the water and secure them by lashings or rudder bands, and to loose these when the ship was again got under way [SMITH].

hoised up the mainsail--her, "the foresail," the best possible sail that be set in the circumstances. How necessary must the crew have been to execute all these movements, and how obvious the foresight which made their stay indispensable to the safety of all on board (see on [Ac 27:31](#))!

41. falling into a place where two seas met--SMITH thinks this refers to the channel, not more than one hundred yards broad, which separates the small island of Salmone from Malta,

forming a communication between the sea inside the bay and that outside.

the fore part stuck fast, and remained immovable--"The rocks of Malta disintegrate into extremely minute particles of sand and clay, which, when acted upon by the currents or surface agitation, form a deposit of tenacious clay; but, in still waters, where these causes do not act, mud is formed; but it is only in creeks, where there are no currents, and at such a depth as to be undisturbed by the waves, that the mud occurs. A ship, therefore, impelled by the force of a gale, into a creek, with such a bottom, would strike a bottom of mud, graduating into tenacious clay, into which the fore part would fix itself, and be held fast, while the stern was exposed to the force of the waves" [SMITH].

hinder part was broken--The *continued action* denoted by the tense here is to be noted--"was fast breaking," going to pieces.

42-44. the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any . . . should escape--Roman cruelty, which made the keepers answerable for their prisoners with their own lives, is here reflected in this cruel proposal.

43. the centurion, &c.--Great must have been the influence of Paul over the centurion's mind to produce such an effect. All followed the swimmers in committing themselves to the deep, and according to the divine pledge and Paul's confident assurance given them, every soul got safe to land--yet without miracle. (While the graphic minuteness of this narrative of the shipwreck puts it beyond doubt that the narrator was himself on board, the great number of *nautical phrases*, which all critics have noted, along with the *unprofessional* air which the whole narrative wears, agrees singularly with all we know and have reason to believe of "the beloved physician"; see on [Ac 16:40](#)).

CHAPTER 28

Ac 28:1-31. THE WINTERING AT MALTA, AND NOTABLE OCCURRENCES THERE--PROSECUTION OF THE VOYAGE TO ITALY AS FAR AS PUTEOLI, AND LAND JOURNEY THENCE TO ROME--SUMMARY OF THE APOSTLE'S LABORS THERE FOR THE TWO FOLLOWING YEARS.

1. knew the island was called Melita--(See on [Ac 27:39](#)). The opinion that this island was not Malta to the south of Sicily, but Meleda in the Gulf of Venice--which till lately had respectable support among Competent judges--is now all but exploded; examination of all the places on the spot, and of all writings and principles bearing on the question, by gentlemen of the highest qualification, particularly SMITH (see on [Ac 27:41](#)), having set the question, it may now be affirmed, at rest.

2. the barbarous people--so called merely as speaking neither the *Greek* nor the *Latin* language. They were originally Phœnician colonists.

showed us no little--"no ordinary"

kindness, for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain--"the rain that was on us"--not now first falling, but then falling heavily.

and because of the cold--welcomed us all, drenched and shivering, to these most seasonable marks of friendship. In this these "barbarians" contrast favorably with many since bearing the Christian name. The lifelike style of the narrative here and in the following verses gives it a great charm.

3. when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks--"a quantity of dry sticks." The vigorous activity of Paul's character is observable in this comparatively trifling action [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat--Having laid itself up among the sticks on the approach of the cold winter season, it had suddenly recovered from its torpor by the heat.

and fastened--its fangs.

on his hand--Vipers dart at their enemies sometimes several feet at a bound. They have now disappeared from Malta, owing to the change which cultivation has produced.

4-6. No doubt this man is a murderer--His chains, which they would see, might strengthen the impression.

whom . . . vengeance suffereth not to live--They believed in a *Supreme, Resistless, Avenging Eye and Hand*, however vague their notions of *where* it resided.

5. shook off the beast and felt no harm--See Mr 16:18.

6. they looked--"continued looking."

when he should have swollen or fallen down dead--familiar with the effects of such bites.

and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said . . . he was a god--from "a murderer" to "a god," as the Lycaonian greeting of Paul and Silas from "sacrificing to them" to "stoning them" (Ac 14:13, 19). What has not the Gospel done for the uncultivated portion of the human family, while its effects on the educated and refined, though very different, are not less marvellous! Verily it is God's chosen restorative for the human spirit, in all the multitudinous forms and gradations of its lapsed state.

7, 8. possessions of the chief man--"the first man."

of the island--He would hardly be so styled in the lifetime of his father, if his distinction was that of the *family*. But it is now ascertained that this was the proper *official* title of the Maltese representative of the Roman prætor to Sicily, to whose province Malta belonged; two inscriptions having been discovered in the island, one in *Greek*, the other in *Latin*, containing the same words which Luke here employs.

who received us--of Paul's company, but doubtless including the "courteous" Julius.

and lodged us three days courteously--till proper winter lodgings could be obtained for them.

8. the father of Publius lay sick of a fever--"fevers." The word was often thus used in the plural number, probably to express *recurring attacks*.

and of a bloody flux--"of dysentery." (The *medical* accuracy of our historian's style has been observed here.)

to whom Paul entered in, and prayed--thereby precluding the supposition that any charm resided in himself.

and laid his hands on him, and healed him--Thus, as our Lord rewarded Peter for the use of his boat (Lu 5:3, 4, &c.), so Paul richly repays Publius for his hospitality. Observe the fulfilment here of two things predicted in Mr 16:18 --the "taking up serpents," and "recovering of the sick by laying hands on them."

9. this . . . done, others . . . came and were healed--"kept coming to [us] and getting healed," that is, during our stay, not all at once [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

10. who also honoured us . . . and when we departed they laded us, &c.--This was not taking hire for the miracles wrought among them (Mt 10:8), but such grateful expressions of feeling, particularly in providing what would minister to their comfort during the voyage, as showed the value they set upon the presence and labors of the apostle among them, and such as it would have hurt their feelings to refuse. Whether any permanent effects of this three months' stay of the greatest of the apostles were left at Malta, we cannot certainly say. But though little dependence is to be placed upon the tradition that Publius became bishop of Malta and afterwards of Athens, we may well believe the accredited tradition that the beginnings of the Christian Church at Malta sprang out of this memorable visit.

11. we departed in a ship of Alexandria--(See on [Ac 27:6](#)).

which had wintered in the isle--no doubt driven on by the same storm which had wrecked on its shores the apostle's vessel--an incidental mark of consistency in the narrative.

whose sign--or "figurehead"; the figure, carved or painted on the bow, which gave name to the vessel. Such figureheads were anciently as common as now.

was Castor and Pollux--the tutelary gods of mariners, to whom all their good fortune was ascribed. St. Anthony is substituted for them in the modern superstitions of Mediterranean (Romanist) sailors. They carry his image in their boats and ships. It is highly improbable that two ships of Alexandria should have been casually found, of which the owners were able and willing to receive on board such a number of passengers (Ac 27:6). We may then reasonably conceive that it was compulsory on the owners to convey soldiers and state travellers [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

12, 13. landing at Syracuse--the ancient and celebrated capital of Sicily, on its eastern coast, about eighty miles, or a day's sail, north from Malta.

we tarried there three days--probably from the state of the wind. Doubtless Paul would wish to go ashore, to find out and break ground among the Jews and proselytes whom such a mercantile center would attract to it; and if this was allowed at the outset of the voyage (Ac 27:3), much more readily would it be now when he had gained the reverence and confidence of all classes with whom he came in contact. At any rate we cannot wonder that he should be regarded by the Sicilians as the founder of the Church of that island.

13. from thence we fetched a compass--that is, proceeded circuitously, or *tacked*, working to windward probably, and availing themselves of the sinuosities of the coast, the wind not being favorable [SMITH]. What follows confirms this.

and came to Rhegium--now *Reggio*, a seaport on the southwest point of the Italian coast, opposite the northeast point of Sicily, and at the entrance of the narrow straits of Messina.

after one day the south wind blew--a south wind having sprung up; being now favored with a fair wind, for want of which they had been obliged first to stay three days at Syracuse, and then to tack and put in for a day at Rhegium.

the next day to Puteoli--now *Pozzuoli*, situated on the northern part of the magnificent bay of Naples about one hundred eighty miles north of Rhegium, a distance which they might make, running before their "south wind," in about twenty-six hours. The Alexandrian corn ships enjoyed a privilege peculiar to themselves, of not being obliged to strike their topsail on landing. By this they were easily recognized as they hove in sight by the crowds that we find gathered on the shore on such occasions [HOWSON].

14, 15. Where we found brethren--not "*the* brethren" (see on [Ac 21:4](#)), from which one would conclude they did not expect to find such [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

and were desired--"requested."

to tarry with them seven days--If this request came from Julius, it may have proceeded partly from a wish to receive instructions from Rome and make arrangements for his journey thither, partly from a wish to gratify Paul, as he seems studiously and increasingly to have done to the last. One can hardly doubt that he was influenced by both considerations. However this may be, the apostle had thus an opportunity of spending a Sabbath with the Christians of the place, all the more refreshing from his long privation in this respect, and as a seasoning for the unknown future that lay before him at the metropolis.

so we went toward Rome.

15. And from thence, when the brethren--of Rome

heard of us--by letter from Puteoli, and probably by the same conveyance which took Julius' announcement of his arrival.

they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum--a town forty-one miles from Rome.

and the Three Taverns--thirty miles from Rome. Thus they came to greet the apostle in two parties, one stopping short at the nearer, the other going on to the more distant place.

whom when Paul saw, he thanked God--for such a welcome. How sensitive he was to such Christian affection all his Epistles show (Ro 1:9, &c.).

and took courage--his long-cherished purpose to "see Rome" (Ac 19:21), there to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the divine pledge that in this he should be gratified (Ac 23:11), being now about to be auspiciously realized.

16. when we came to Rome--the renowned capital of the ancient world, situated on the Tiber.

the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard--the *Prætorian Prefect*, to whose custody, as commander of the Prætorian guard, the highest military authority in the city, were committed all who were to come before the emperor for trial. Ordinarily there were two such prefects; but from A.D. 51 to 62, one distinguished general--*Burrus Aframus*, who had been Nero's tutor--held that office; and as our historian speaks of "*the* captain," as if there were but one, it is thought that this fixes the apostle's arrival at Rome to be not later than the year 62 [WIES]. But even though there had been two when Paul arrived, he would be committed only to one of them, who would be "*the* captain" who got charge of him. (At most, therefore, this can furnish no more than confirmation to the chronological evidence otherwise obtained).

but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a--"the"

soldier that kept him--"guarded" him. (See on [Ac 12:6](#)). This privilege was allowed in the case of the better class of prisoners, not accused of any flagrant offense, on finding security--which in Paul's case would not be difficult among the Christians. The extension of this privilege to the apostle may have been due to the terms in which Festus wrote about him; but far more probably it was owing to the high terms in which Julius spoke of him, and his express intercession in his behalf. It was overruled, however, for giving the fullest scope to the labors of the apostle compatible with confinement at all. As the soldiers who kept him were relieved periodically, he would thus make the personal acquaintance of a great number of the Prætorian guard; and if he had to appear before the Prefect from time to time, the truth might thus penetrate to those who surrounded the emperor, as we learn, from Php 1:12, 13, that it did.

17-20. Paul called the chief of the Jews together--Though banished from the capital by

Claudius, the Jews enjoyed the full benefit of the toleration which distinguished the first period of Nero's reign, and were at this time in considerable numbers, wealth, and influence settled at Rome. We have seen that long before this a flourishing Christian Church existed at Rome, to which Paul wrote his Epistle (see on [Ac 20:3](#)), and the first members of which were probably Jewish converts and proselytes. (See [Introduction](#) to Romans.)

yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans--the Roman authorities, Felix and Festus.

19. I was constrained to appeal . . . not that I had aught to accuse my nation of--"I am here not as their accuser, but as my own defender, and this not of choice but necessity." His object in alluding thus gently to the treatment he had received from the Jews was plainly to avoid whatever might irritate his visitors at the first; especially as he was not aware whether any or what information against him had reached their community.

20. For this cause . . . have I called for you . . . because . . . for the hope of Israel--(See on [Ac 26:6, 7](#)).

I am bound with this chain--"This cause is not so much mine as yours; it is the nation's cause; all that is dear to the heart and hope of Israel is bound up with this case of mine." From the touching allusions which the apostle makes to his chains, before Agrippa first, and here before the leading members of the Jewish community at Rome, at his first interview with them, one would gather that his great soul felt keenly his being in such a condition; and it is to this keenness of feeling, under the control of Christian principle, that we owe the noble use which he made of it in these two cases.

21, 22. We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, &c.--We need not suppose (with THOLUCK and others) that there was any dishonest concealment here. The distinction made between himself, against whom they heard nothing, and his "sect," as "everywhere spoken against," is a presumption in favor of their sincerity; and there is ground to think that as the case took an unexpected turn by Paul's appealing to Cæsar, so no information on the subject would travel from Jerusalem to Rome in advance of the apostle himself.

22. we desire--"deem it proper"

to hear of thee what thou thinkest--what are thy sentiments, views, &c. The apparent freedom from prejudice here expressed may have arisen from a prudent desire to avoid endangering a repetition of those dissensions about Christianity to which, probably, SÜETONIUS alludes, and which had led to the expulsion of the Jews under Claudius [HUMPHRY]. See on [Ac 18:2](#).

23, 24. there came many--"considerable numbers"

into his lodging--The word denotes one's place of stay as a *guest* (Phm 22), not "his own hired house," mentioned in Ac 28:30. Some Christian friends--possibly Aquila and Priscilla, who had returned to Rome (Ro 16:3), would be glad to receive him, though he would soon find himself more at liberty in a house of his own.

to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God--opening up the great spiritual principles of that kingdom in opposition to the contracted and secular views of it entertained by the Jews.

persuading them concerning Jesus--as the ordained and predicted Head of that kingdom.
out of the law . . . and the prophets--drawing his materials and arguments from a source

mutually acknowledged.

from morning till evening--"Who would not wish to have been present?" exclaims BENGEL; but virtually we *are* present while *listening* to those Epistles which he *dictated* from his prison at Rome, and to his other epistolary expositions of Christian truth against the Jews.

24. and some believed . . . some not--What simplicity and candor are in this record of a result repeated from age to age where the Gospel is presented to a promiscuous assemblage of sincere and earnest inquirers after truth, frivolous worldlings, and prejudiced bigots!

25-29. when they--the Jews.

agreed not among themselves--the discussion having passed into one between the two parties into which the visitors were now divided, respecting the arguments and conclusions of the apostle.

they departed--the material of discussion being felt by both parties to be exhausted.

after Paul had spoken one word--one solemn parting testimony, from those Scriptures regarded by both alike as "the Holy Ghost speaking" to Israel.

26. Hearing, ye shall hear, &c.--(See on [Mt 13:13-15](#) and [Joh 12:38-40](#)). With what pain would this stern saying be wrung from him whose "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they might be saved," and who "had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart" on their account (Ro 10:1; 9:2)!

28. the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear--(See on [Ac 13:44-48](#)). "This departure to the Gentiles" he had intimated to the perverse Jews at *Antioch* (Ac 13:46), and at *Corinth* (Ac 18:6); now at *Rome*: thus in *Asia, Greece, and Italy*" [BENGEL].

29. the Jews departed, and had great--"much"

reasoning among themselves--"This verse is wanting in many manuscripts [and omitted by several recent editors], but certainly without reason. Probably the words were regarded as superfluous, as they seem to tell us what we were told before, that Paul "departed" (see Ac 28:25). But in Ac 28:25 it is the breaking off of the discourse that is meant, here the final departure from the house" [OLSHAUSEN].

30. in his own hired house--(See on [Ac 28:23](#)), yet still in custody, for he only "received all that *came to him*"; and it is not said that he went to the synagogue or anywhere else.

31. with all confidence, no man forbidding him--enjoying, in the uninterrupted exercise of his ministry, all the liberty of a *guarded* man. Thus closes this most precious monument of the beginnings of the Christian Church in its march from east to west, among the Jews first, whose center was Jerusalem; next among the Gentiles, with Antioch for its headquarters; finally, its banner is seen waving over imperial Rome, foretoking its universal triumphs. That distinguished apostle whose conversion, labors, and sufferings for "the faith which once he destroyed" occupy more than half of this History, it leaves a prisoner, unheard, so far as appears, for two years. His accusers, whose presence was indispensable, would have to await the return of spring before starting for the capital, and might not reach it for many months; nor, even when there, would they be so sanguine of success--after Felix, Festus, and Agrippa had all pronounced him innocent--as to be impatient of delay. And if witnesses were required to prove the charge advanced by Tertullus, that he was "a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the

[Roman] world" (Ac 24:5), they must have seen that unless considerable time was allowed them the case would certainly break down. If to this be added the capricious delays which the emperor himself might interpose, and the practice of Nero to hear but one charge at a time, it will not seem strange that the historian should have no proceedings in the case to record for two years. Begun, probably, before the apostle's arrival, its progress at Rome under his own eye would furnish exalted employment, and beguile many a tedious hour of his two years' imprisonment. Had the case come on for hearing during this period, much more if it had been disposed of, it is hardly conceivable that the History should have closed as it does. But if, at the end of this period, the Narrative only wanted the decision of the case, while hope deferred was making the heart sick (Pr 13:12), and if, under the guidance of that Spirit whose seal was on it all, it seemed of more consequence to put the Church at once in possession of this History than to keep it back indefinitely for the sake of what might come to be otherwise known, we cannot wonder that it should be wound up as it is in its two concluding verses. All that we know of the apostle's proceedings and history beyond this must be gathered from the *Epistles of the Imprisonment*--Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon--written during this period, and the *Pastoral Epistles*--to Timothy and Titus, which, in our judgment, are of subsequent date. From the former class of Epistles we learn the following particulars: (1) That the trying restraint laid upon the apostle's labors by his imprisonment had only turned his influence into a new channel; the Gospel having in consequence penetrated even into the palace, and pervaded the city, while the preachers of Christ were emboldened; and though the Judaizing portion of them, observing his success among the Gentiles, had been led to inculcate with fresh zeal their own narrower Gospel, even this had done much good by extending the truth common to both (See on [Php 1:12-18](#); [Php 4:22](#)); (2) That as in addition to all his other labors, "the care of all the churches pressed upon him from day to-day" (2Co 11:28), so with these churches he kept up an active correspondence by means of letters and messages, and on such errands he lacked not faithful and beloved brethren enough ready to be employed--*Luke*; *Timotheus*; *Tychicus*; (John) *Mark*; *Demas*; *Aristarchus*; *Epaphras*; *Onesimus*; *Jesus*, called Justus; and, for a short time, *Epaphroditus* (See on [Col 4:7](#); [Col 4:9-12](#); [Col 4:14](#); [Phm 23, 24](#); see [Introduction](#) to Ephesians, [Introduction](#) to Philippians, and [Introduction](#) to Philemon). That the apostle suffered martyrdom under Nero at Rome has never been doubted. But that the appeal which brought him to Rome issued in his liberation, that he was at large for some years thereafter and took some wide missionary circuits, and that he was again arrested, carried to Rome, and then executed--was the undisputed belief of the early Church, as expressed by CHRYSOSTOM, JEROME, and EUSEBIUS, in the fourth century, up to CLEMENT OF ROME, the "fellow laborer" of the apostle himself (Php 4:3), in the first century. The strongest possible confirmation of this is found in the Pastoral Epistles, which bear marks throughout of a more advanced state of the Church, and more matured forms of error, than can well have existed at any period before the appeal which brought the apostle to Rome; which refer to movements of himself and Timothy that cannot without some straining (as we think) be made to fit into any prior period; and which are couched in a manifestly riper style than any of his other Epistles. (See [Introduction](#) to First Timothy, [Introduction](#) to Second Timothy [Introduction](#) to Titus and *Notes*). All this has been called in question by modern critics of great research and acuteness [PETAVIUS, LARDNER, DE WETTE, WIESELER, DAVIDSON, and others]. But those who maintain the ancient view are of equal authority and more numerous, while the weight of argument appears to us to be decidedly on their side.
