

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him, That he should not die : but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is it* to thee ?

24 This is the disciple, who testifieth of these things, and wrote these
25 things : and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were to be written particularly, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that were written.

V. 23. *The brethren*—That is, the Christians. Our Lord himself taught them that appellation, ch. xx. 17. *Yet Jesus did not say to him, That he should not die*—Not expressly. And St. *John* himself, at the time of writing his gospel, seems not to have known clearly, whether he should die or not.

V. 24. *This is the disciple who testifieth*—Being still alive after he had wrote. *And we*

know that his testimony is true—The church added these words to St. *John's* gospel, as *Tertius* did those to St. *Paul's* epistle to the *Romans*, chap. xvi. 22.

V. 25. *If they were to be written particularly*—Every fact and all the circumstances of it. *I suppose*—This expression which softens the hyperbole, shews that St. *John* wrote this verse.

N O T E S

O N

The ACTS of the APOSTLES.

THIS Book, in which St. *Luke* records the actions of the apostles, particularly of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* (whose companion in travel he was) is as it were the centre between the gospels and the epistles. It contains, after a very brief recapitulation of the evangelical history, a continuation of the history of *Christ*, the event of his predictions, and a kind of supplement to what he before spake to his disciples by the Holy Ghost now given unto them. It contains also the seeds and first stamina of all those things, which are enlarged upon in the epistles.

The gospels treat of *Christ* the head : the *Acts* shew, That the same things befall his body ; which is animated by his Spirit, persecuted by the world, defended and exalted by God.

In this book is shewn the Christian doctrine, and the method of applying it to Jews, Heathens, and believers; that is, to those who are to be converted, and those who are converted: the hinderances of it in particular men, in several kinds of men, in different ranks and nations: the propagation of the gospel, and that grand revolution among both Jews and Heathens: the victory thereof, in spite of all opposition, from all the power, malice, and wisdom of the whole world, spreading from one chamber into temples, houses, streets, markets; fields, inns, prisons, camps, courts; chariots, ships, villages, cities, islands: to Jews, Heathens, magistrates, generals, soldiers, eunuchs, captives, slaves, women, children, sailors: to *Athens*, and at length to *Rome*.

The parts of it are seven.

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|--|------------|--|----------------|
| 1. Pentecost, with its antecedents, | C. i. ii. | tiles, | C. xiii. xiv. |
| 2. Transactions with the Jews, in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria, | C. iii—ix. | 5. The embassy to, and council of Jerusalem, concerning the liberty of the Gentiles, | C. xv. |
| 3. Transactions at Cesarea, and the reception of the Gentiles, | C. x. xi. | 6. The second course of St. Paul, | C. xvi—xix. |
| 4. The first course of Barnabas and Paul among the Gen- | | 7. His third as far as Rome, | C. xix—xxviii. |

The A C T S.

I. **T**HE former treatise have I composed, O Theophilus, of all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach, Until the day he was taken up, after having through the Holy Ghost given commandment to the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he presented himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen by them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of

V. 1. *The former treatise*—In that important season, which reached from the resurrection of *Christ* to his ascension, *the former treatise* ends, and this begins: this describing the *Acts* of the Holy Ghost (by the apostles) as that does the *Acts* of *Jesus Christ*. *Of all things*—In a summary manner: *Which Jesus began to do—until the day*—That is, Of all things which *Jesus* did, from the beginning till that day.

V. 2. *After having given commandment*—In the 3d verse, St. *Luke* expresses in general terms, what *Christ* said to his apostles during those *forty days*. But in the 4th, and following verses, he declares what he said on the day of his ascension. He had brought his former account down to that day. And from that day begin the *Acts* of the apostles.

V. 3. *Being seen by them forty days*—That

- 4 God. And having assembled *them* together, he commanded them, not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father,
- 5 which, *saith he*, ye have heard from me. For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many
- 6 days hence. And when they were come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?
- 7 But he said to them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons,
- 8 which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, the Holy Ghost being come upon you, and shall be witnesses to me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the
- 9 uttermost part of the earth. And having spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him from their
- 10 sight. And while they were stedfastly looking up to heaven, as he went up, behold two men, in white apparel stood by them, who also said,
- 11 Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall come, as ye have seen him going
- 12 into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey.
- 13 * And when they were come in, they went up into the upper room, where both Peter and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas,

That is, Many times during that space. *And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*—Which was the sum of all his discourses with them, before his passion also.

V. 4. *Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard from me*—When he was with *them* a little before, as it is recorded, Luke xxiv. 49.

V. 5. *Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost*—And so are all true believers, to the end of the world. But the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost also are here promised.

V. 6. *Dost thou at this time*—At the time thou now speakest of? *Not many days hence? Restore the kingdom to Israel?*—They still seemed to dream of an outward, temporal kingdom, in which the Jews should have

dominion over all nations. It seems, they came in a body, having before concerted the design, to ask, When this kingdom would come?

V. 7. *The times or the seasons*—Times, in the language of the scripture, denote a longer, seasons, a shorter space: *Which the Father hath put in his own power*—To be revealed, when and to whom it pleaseth him.

V. 8. *But ye shall receive power—and shall be witnesses to me*—That is, Ye shall be empowered to witness my gospel, both by your preaching and suffering:

V. 12. *A sabbath day's journey*—The Jews generally fix this to two thousand cubits, which is not a mile.

V. 13. *They went up into the upper room*—The upper rooms, so frequently mentioned

in

* Matt. x. 2. Mark iii. 14. Luke vi. 13.

Bartholomew and Matthew, James, *the son* of Alpheus, and Simon
 14 Zelotes, and Jude *the brother* of James tarried. These all continued
 with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary
 the mother of Jesus, and his brethren.

15 And in these days, Peter standing up in the midst of the disciples,
 (the number of persons together was about an hundred and twenty)
 16 said, Men, brethren, this † scripture must needs have been fulfilled,
 which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David, concerning
 17 Judas, who was guide to them that apprehended Jesus. For he was
 18 numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this
 man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling down
 on his face, he burst asunder in the middle, and all his bowels gushed
 19 out. And it was known to all that dwell at Jerusalem, so that that
 field is called, in their own tongue, Akeldama, that is, The field of blood.
 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‡ Let his habitation be desolate,
 and let no man dwell therein: and || his bishoprick let another take.
 21 Wherefore of these men who have been with us all the time that the Lord
 22 Jesus was going in and out over us, Beginning from the baptism of John,
 till the day he was taken up from us, one must be a witness with us of his
 23 resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was

in scripture, where chambers in the highest part of the house, set apart by the *Jews* for private prayer. These, on account of their being so retired and convenient, the apostles now used for all the offices of religion.

V. 14. *His brethren*—His near kinsmen, who, for some time, did not believe: it seems, not till near his death.

V. 15. *The number of persons together*—Who were together in the upper room; *were a hundred and twenty*—But he had undoubtedly many more in other places, of whom more than five hundred saw him at once after his resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 6.

V. 18. *This man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity*—That is, a field was purchased with the reward of his iniquity; though very possibly *Judas* might design the

purchase. *And falling down on his face*—It seems, the rope broke before, or as he died.

V. 19. *In their own tongue*—This expression, that is, *The field of blood*—St. Luke seems to have added to the words of St. Peter, for the use of *Theophilus* and other readers, who did not understand *Hebrew*.

V. 20. *His bishoprick*—That is, his apostleship.

V. 21. *All the time the Lord Jesus was going in and out*—That is, *Conversing familiarly!* *Over us*—As our master.

V. 22. *To be a witness with us of his resurrection*—And of the circumstances which preceded and followed it.

V. 23. *And they appointed two*—So far the faithful could go by consulting together, but no farther. Therefore here commenced the

† Psalm xli. 9. ‡ Psalm lxxix. 25. || Psalm cix. 8.

24 surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, Thou, Lord,
 who knowest the hearts of all, shew which of these two thou hast chosen,
 25 To take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by
 26 transgression fell, to go to his own place. And they gave forth their
 lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the
 eleven apostles.

II. And when the day of Pentecost was come, they were all with one
 2 accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven,
 as of a rushing violent wind, and it filled all the house where they
 3 were sitting. And there appeared to them distinct tongues, as of fire;
 4 and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy
 Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave
 5 them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout
 6 men, out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised

the proper use of the lot, whereby a matter of importance, which cannot be determined by any ordinary method, is committed to the divine decision.

V. 25. *Fell*—By his *transgression*—Some time before his death: *To go to his own place*—That which his crimes had deserved and which he had chosen for himself, far from the other apostles in the region of death.

V. 1. At the Pentecost of *Sinai* in the Old Testament, and the Pentecost of *Jerusalem* in the New, were the two grand manifestations of God, the legal and the evangelical: the one from the mountain, and the other from heaven; the terrible, and the merciful one. *They were all with one accord in one place*—So here was a conjunction of company, minds, and place; the whole hundred and twenty being present.

V. 2. *And suddenly there was a sound from heaven*—So will the Son of man come to judgment. *And it filled all the house*—That is, all that part of the temple, where they were sitting.

V. 3. *And there appeared distinct tongues, as of fire*—That is, small flames of fire.

This is all which the phrase, *tongues of fire*, means in the language of the seventy. Yet it might intimate God's touching their tongues as it were (together with their hearts) with divine fire: his giving them such words as were active and penetrating, even as flaming fire.

V. 4. *And they began to speak with other tongues*—The miracle was not in the ears of the hearers (as some have unaccountably supposed) but in the mouth of the speakers. And this family praising God together, with the tongues of all the world, was an earnest that the whole world should in due time praise God in their various tongues. *As the Spirit gave them utterance*—*Moses* the type of the law, was of a slow tongue. But the gospel speaks with a fiery and flaming one.

V. 5. *And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews*—Gathered from all parts by the peculiar providence of God.

V. 6. *The multitude came together and were confounded*—The motions of their mind were swift and various.

abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because
 7 every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they
 were amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, art
 8 not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how hear we every
 9 one, in our own native language, Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,
 and dwellers in Mesopotamia, and Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus
 10 and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Africk
 11 about Cyrene, and Roman sojourners, (Jews and Profelytes) Cretans
 and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our tongues the wonderful
 12 works of God? And they were all amazed, and were in doubt,
 13 saying one to another, What can this mean? But others mocking,
 said, They are full of sweet wine.

14 Then Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and
 said to them, Men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem,
 15 be this known to you, and hearken to my words, These are not

V. 9. *Judea*—The dialect of which greatly differed from that of *Galilee—Asia*—The country strictly so called.

V. 10. *Roman sojourners*—Born at Rome, but now living at Jerusalem. These seem to have come to Jerusalem, after those who are above-mentioned. All of them were partly Jews by birth, and partly profelytes.

V. 11. *Cretans*—One island seems to be mentioned for all. *The wonderful works of God*—Probably those which related to the miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, together with the effusion of his Spirit, as a fulfilment of his promises, and the glorious dispensations of gospel grace.

V. 12. *They were all amazed*—All the devout men.

V. 13. *But others mocking*—The world begins with *mocking*, thence proceeds to *cavilling*, ch. iv. 7; to *threats*, ver. 17; to *imprisoning*, ch. v. 18; to *blows*, ver. 40; to *slaughter*, ch. vii. 58. These mockers appear to have been some of the natives of Judea, and inhabitants of Jerusalem (who understood only the dialect of the country)

by the apostle's immediately directing his discourse to them in the next verse. *They are full of sweet wine*—So the Greek word properly signifies: there was no new wine so early in the year as Pentecost. Thus natural men are wont to ascribe supernatural things to mere natural causes: and many times as impudently and unskillfully, as in the present case.

V. 14. *Then Peter standing up*—All the gestures, all the words of Peter shew the utmost sobriety: *lifted up his voice*—With cheerfulness and boldness: *And said to them*—This discourse has three parts, each of which (ver. 14, 22, 29.) begins with the same appellation, *men*: only to the last part he prefixes with more familiarity, the additional word *brethren*. *Men of Judea*—That is, Ye that were born in Judea. St. Peter spoke in Hebrew, which they all understood.

V. 15. *It is but the third hour of the day*—That is, nine in the morning. And on the solemn festivals, the Jews rarely eat or drank any thing till noon.

V. 16. *But*

drunken as ye suppose: for it is *but* the third hour of the day.
 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, * And it
 17 shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my
 spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
 and your young men shall see visions, and your old men
 18 shall dream dreams: And in those days I will pour out of my spirit
 upon my servants, and upon my handmaids, and they shall prophesy
 19 And I will shew prodigies in heaven above, and signs on earth beneath,
 20 blood and fire, and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into
 darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord,

V. 16. *But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet*—But there is another and better way of accounting for this.

V. 17. The times of the *Messiah* are frequently called *The last days*, the gospel being the last dispensation of divine grace. *I will pour out of my spirit*—Not on the day of Pentecost only, *upon all flesh*—On persons of every age, sex, and rank. *And your young men shall see visions*—In young men the outward senses are most vigorous, and the bodily strength is entire, whereby they are best qualified to sustain the shock which usually attends the visions of God. In *old men* the internal senses are most vigorous, suited to the divine *dreams*. Not that the old are wholly excluded from the former, nor the young from the latter.

V. 18. *And upon my servants*—On those who are literally in a state of servitude.

V. 19. *And I will shew prodigies in heaven above, and signs on earth beneath*—Great Revelations of grace are usually attended with great judgments on those who reject it. *In heaven*—Treated of, ver. 20: *On earth*—Described in this verse. Such signs were those mentioned, ver. 22, before the passion of *Christ*; which are so mentioned as to include also those at the very time of the passion and resurrection, at the destruc-

tion of *Jerusalem* and at the end of the world.

Terrible indeed were those prodigies in particular, which preceded the destruction of *Jerusalem*: Such as the flaming sword hanging over the city, and the fiery comet, pointing down upon it for a year; the light that shone upon the temple and the altar in the night, as if it had been noon-day; the opening of the great and heavy gate of the temple without hands; the voice heard from the most holy place, *Let us depart hence*; the admonition of *Jesus*, the son of *Ananus*, crying for seven years together, *Wo, Wo, Wo*, the vision of contending armies in the air, and of intrenchments thrown up against a city there represented; the terrible thunders and lightnings, and dreadful earthquakes, which every one considered as portending some great evil: all which, through the singular providence of God, are particularly recorded by *Josephus*. *Blood*—War and slaughter. *Fire*—Burnings of houses and towns, involving all in clouds of *smoke*.

V. 20. *The moon shall be turned into blood*—A bloody colour: *before the day of the Lord*—Eminently, the last day; though not excluding any other day or season, wherein the Lord shall manifest his glory in taking vengeance of his adversaries.

V. 21. *But*

3 Y

* Joel ii. 28.

21 the great and illustrious *day*, come. But it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.
 22 Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man pointed out to you of God, by miracles and wonders, and signs, which God wrought
 23 by him in the midst of you, as yourselves also know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye
 24 have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, as it was not
 25 possible that he should be held under it. For David speaketh concerning him, * I have seen the Lord always before my face, for he is on my
 26 right-hand, that I may not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and
 27 my tongue exulteth: yea, and my flesh shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to
 28 see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou
 29 wilt fill me with joy by thy countenance. Men *and* brethren, I may say to you freely of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and
 30 buried, and his sepulchre is among us to this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, That

V. 21. *But whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord*—This expression implies the whole of religion, and particularly prayer uttered in faith; *shall be saved*—From all those plagues; from sin and hell.

V. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God*—The apostle here anticipates an objection, Why did God suffer such a person to be so treated? Did he not know what wicked men intended to do? And had he not power to prevent it? Yea, he knew all that those wicked men intended to do. And he had power to blast all their designs in a moment. But he did not exert that power, because he *so loved the world!* Because it was the determinate counsel of his love, to redeem mankind from eternal death, by the death of his only begotten Son.

V. 24. *Having loosed the pains of death*—

The word properly means, the pains of a woman in travail. *As it was not possible that he should be held under it*—Because the scripture must needs be fulfilled.

V. 27. *Thou shalt not leave my soul in Hades*—The invisible world. But it does not appear, that ever our Lord went into hell. His soul, when it was separated from the body, did not go thither, but to paradise. (Luke xxiii. 43.) The meaning is, thou wilt not leave my soul in its separate state, not to suffer my body to be corrupted.

V. 28. *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life*—That is, thou hast raised me from the dead, *Thou wilt fill me with joy by thy countenance*—When I ascend to thy right-hand.

V. 29. *The patriarch*—A more honourable title than king.

V. 31. *He*

* Psalm xvi. 8.

31 of the fruit † of his loins *one* should sit on his throne, He foreseeing
this, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in
 32 Hades, neither did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God hath raised
 33 up, whereof all we are witnesses. Being therefore exalted by the right-
 hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the
 34 Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For
 David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, ‡ The
 35 Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right-hand, Until I make thine
 36 enemies thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know
 assuredly, That God hath made this Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord
 and Christ.

37 And hearing *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter
 38 and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said,
 Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus,
 for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy

V. 31. *He foreseeing this, spake of the resurrection of Christ*—St. Peter argues thus, *It is plain, David did not speak this of himself.* Therefore he spake of *Christ's* rising. But how does that promise of a kingdom imply his resurrection? Because he did not receive it before he died, and because his kingdom was to endure for ever. (2 Sam. vii. 13.)

V. 33. *Being exalted by the right-hand of God*—*By the right-hand*, that is, the mighty power of God, our Lord was exalted at his ascension to God's right-hand in heaven.

V. 34. *Sit thou on my right-hand*—In this and the following verse is an allusion to two ancient customs; one, to the highest honour that used to be paid to persons, by placing them on the right-hand, as Solomon did Bathsheba, when sitting on his throne; (1 Kings ii. 19.) and the other, to the custom of conquerors, who used to tread on the necks of their vanquished enemies, as a token of their entire victory and triumph over them.

V. 35. *Until I make thine enemies thy footstool*—This text is here quoted with the greatest address, as suggesting in the words of *David*, their great prophetic monarch, how certain their own ruin must be, if they went on to oppose *Christ*.

V. 36. *Lord—Jesus* after his exaltation is constantly meant by this word in the New Testament, unless sometimes where it occurs, in a text quoted from the Old Testament.

V. 37. *They said to the apostles, brethren*—They did not stile them so before.

V. 38. *Repent*—And hereby return to God: *be baptized*—Believing in the name of *Jesus*—*And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*—See the Three-one God clearly proved. See ch. xxvi. 20. *The gift of the Holy Ghost* does not mean in this place, the power of speaking with tongues. For the promise of this was not given to all that were afar off, in distant ages and nations: but rather the constant fruits of faith, even righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. *Whomsoever the Lord our God shall*

3 Y 2

† Joel ii. 28. Psalm lxxxix. 4, &c. ‡ Psalm cx. 1.

39 Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all
40 that are afar off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call. And with
41 many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves
from this perverse generation. Then they, gladly receiving his word,
were baptized; and there were added *to them* that day about three thou-
sand souls.

42 And they continued stedfast in the teaching of the apostles, and the
43 fellowship, and the breaking of bread, and the prayers. And fear came
upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were wrought by
44 the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things
45 common, And sold their possessions and goods, and divided them to all,
46 as any one had need. And continuing daily with one accord in the
temple, and breaking the bread at home, they partook of their food with
gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with

shall call—(Whether they are *Jews* or *Gentiles*.) By his word and by his spirit: and who are not disobedient to the heavenly calling. But it is observable St. Peter did not yet understand the very words he spoke.

V. 40. *And with many other words did he testify and exhort*—In such an accepted time we should add line upon line, and not leave off, till the thing is done. *Save yourselves from this perverse generation*—Many of whom were probably mocking still.

V. 41. *And there were added*—To the hundred and twenty.

V. 42. *And they continued stedfast*—So their daily church-communion consisted in these four particulars, 1. Hearing the word, 2. Having all things common, 3. Receiving the Lord's Supper. 4. Prayer.

Ye different sects, who all declare,
Lo here is *Christ*, and *Christ* is there!
Your stronger proofs divinely give,
And shew me, where the *Christians* live!

V. 43. *And fear came upon every soul*—Of those who did not join with them; whereby persecution was prevented, till it was needful for them.

V. 45. *And sold their possessions*—Their lands and houses; *and goods*—Their moveables; *And parted them to all, as any one had need*—To say the *Christians* did this, only till the destruction of *Jerusalem*, is not true; for many did it long after. Not that there was any positive command for so doing: it needed not; for love constrained them. It was a natural fruit of that love wherewith each member of the community loved every other as his own soul. And if the whole Christian church had continued in this spirit, this usage must have continued through all ages. To affirm therefore that *Christ* did not *design it should continue*, is neither more nor less than to affirm, that *Christ* did not *design this measure of love should continue*. I see no proof of this.

V. 46. *Continuing daily—breaking the bread*—In the Lord's supper, as did many churches for some ages. *They partook of their food with gladness and singleness of heart*—They carried the same happy and holy temper through all their common actions: eating and working with the same spirit, wherewith they prayed and received the Lord's supper.

V. 47. *The*

47 all the people. And the Lord added daily to the church those who were saved.

III. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour
2 of prayer, the ninth *hour*. And a certain man, lame from his mother's
womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple,
called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that were entering into the temple,
3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms.
4 And Peter looking stedfastly upon him, with John, said, Look on us.
5 And he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something of them.
6 Then said Peter, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, I give
7 thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And
taking him by the right-hand he lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet
8 and ankle-bones were strengthened, And leaping up, he stood and walked,
and went with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising
9 God. And all the people saw him walking, and praising God. And
10 they knew him, that this was he who had sat for alms at the beautiful
gate of the temple, and were filled with wonder and amazement
at that which had befallen him.

11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together to them,
in the portico that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12 And Peter seeing *it*, answered the people, Ye men of Israel, why

V. 47. *The Lord added daily such as were saved*—From their sins; from the guilt and power of them.

V. 1. *The ninth hour*—The Jews divided the time from sun-rise to sun-set into twelve hours; which were consequently of unequal length at different times of the year, as the days were longer or shorter. The third hour therefore was nine in the morning; the ninth three in the afternoon: but not exactly. For the third was the middle space between sun-rise and noon: which, if the sun rose at five, (the earliest hour of its rising in that climate) was half an hour after eight: if at seven (the latest hour of its rising there) was half an hour after-nine. The chief hours of prayer were the third and ninth; at which seasons the morning and evening

sacrifices were offered, and incense (a kind of emblem representing prayer) burnt on the golden altar.

V. 2. *At the gate of the temple called Beautiful*—This gate was added by Herod the Great, between the court of the *Gentiles* and that of *Israel*. It was thirty cubits high, and fifteen broad, and made of *Corinthian* brass, more pompous in its workmanship and splendor than those that were covered with silver and gold.

V. 6. *Then said Peter. silver and gold have I none*—How unlike his supposed successor! Can the Bishop of Rome either say or do the same?

V. 12. *Peter answered the people*—Who were running together, and enquiring into the circumstances of the fact.

V. 13. *The*

marvel ye at this? Or why do ye fix your eyes on us as if by our
 13 own power or piety we had made this man to walk? The God of
 Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers hath
 glorified his son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and renounced him in
 the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to release *him*.
 14 But ye renounced the holy one, and the just, and desired a murderer
 15 to be granted you, And killed the prince of life, whom God hath
 16 raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And his name,
 through faith in his name, hath strengthened this man, whom ye see
 and know; yea, the faith which is by him, hath given him this
 17 perfect soundness, in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I
 18 know that through ignorance ye did *it*, as did also your rulers. But
 God hath thus fulfilled the things which he foretold by the mouth
 19 of all the prophets, that Christ should suffer. Repent ye therefore
 and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that the times of
 20 refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, And he may send

V. 13. *The God of our fathers*—This was wisely introduced in the beginning of his discourse, that it might appear they taught no new religion, inconsistent with that of *Moses*, and were far from having the least design to divert their regards from the God of *Israel*. *Hath glorified his son*—By this miracle, *whom ye delivered up*—When God had given him to you, and when ye ought to have received him as a most precious treasure, and to have preserved him with all your power.

V. 14. *Ye renounced the holy one*—Whom God had marked out as such; *and the just one*—Even in the judgment of *Pilate*.

V. 16. *His name*—Himself: his power and love. *The faith which is by him*—Of which he is the giver, as well as the object.

V. 17. *And now, brethren*—A word full of courtesy and compassion, *I know*—He speaks to their heart, *that thro' ignorance ye did it*—Which lessened, tho' it could not take away the guilt. *As did also your rulers*—The prejudice lying from the authority of the chief priests and elders, he

here removes, but with great tenderness. He does not call them *our* but *your* rulers. For as the *Jewish* dispensation ceased at the death of *Christ*, consequently so did the authority of its rulers.

V. 18. *But God*—Who was not ignorant, permitted this, which he had foretold, to bring good out of it.

V. 19. *Be converted*—Be turned from sin and Satan unto God. See ch. xxvi. 20. But this term, so common in modern writings, very rarely occurs in scripture: perhaps not once in the sense we now use it, for an entire change from vice to holiness. *That the times of refreshing*—Wherein God largely bestows his refreshing grace, *may come*—To you also. To others they will assuredly come, whether ye repent or no.

V. 20. *And he may send*—The apostles generally speak of our Lord's second coming, as being just at hand. *Who was before appointed*—Before the foundation of the world.

V. 21. *Till*

21 to you Jesus Christ, who was before appointed, Whom heaven must receive, till the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath
 22 spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets. For Moses truly said to the fathers, * The Lord your God shall raise you up a prophet of your brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he
 23 shall say to you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul who will
 24 not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and them that followed, whosoever
 25 have spoken, have also foretold these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying: to Abraham, * And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be
 26 blessed. God having raised up his son, hath sent him to you first, to bless you, by turning every one of you from your iniquities.

IV. And as they were speaking to the people, the priests, and the captain:

V. 21. *Till the times of the restitution of all things*—The apostle here comprizes at once the whole course of the time of the New Testament, between our Lord's ascension and his coming in glory. The most eminent of these are the apostolic age, and that of the spotless church, which will consist of all the Jews and Gentiles united, after all persecutions and apostasies are at an end.

V. 22. *The Lord shall raise you up a prophet like unto me*—And that, in many particulars. Moses instituted the Jewish church: Christ instituted the Christian. With the prophesying of Moses was soon joined the effect, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt: With the prophesying of Christ that grand effect, the deliverance of his people from sin and death. Those who could not bear the voice of God, yet desired to hear that of Moses. Much more do those who are wearied with the law, desire to hear the voice of Christ. Moses spake to the people all and only those things which God had commanded him: so did Christ. But tho' he was like Moses, yet was he in-

initely superior to him, in person, as well as in office.

V. 23. *Every soul who will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people*—One cannot imagine a more masterly address than this, to warn the Jews of the dreadful consequence of their infidelity, in the very words of their favourite prophet, out of a pretended zeal for whom they rejected Christ.

V. 24. *These days*—The days of the Messiah.

V. 25. *Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant*—That is, heirs of the prophecies. To you properly, as the first heirs, belong the prophecies and the covenant.

V. 26. *To bless you, by turning you from your iniquities*—Which is the great gospel-blessing.

V. 1. *And as they were speaking to the people, the priests—came upon them*—So wisely did God order, that they should first bear a full testimony to the truth in the temple, and then in the great council; to which they could have had no access, had they not been brought before it as criminals.

V. 2. *The*

* Deut. xviii. 15. * Gen. xii. 3.

2 of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, Being grieved
 3 that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection
 4 from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold
 5 till the next day: for it was now evening. But many of them who
 6 had heard the word believed: and the number of the men was about
 7 five thousand. And on the morrow were gathered together at Jerusalem
 8 their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high-priest, and
 9 Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred
 10 of the high-priest. And having set them in the midst, they asked, By what
 11 power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the
 Holy Ghost, said to them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,
 If we are examined this day, of the benefit done to the impotent
 man, by what means he is healed, Be it known to you all, and to
 all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of
 Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead,
 by him doth this man stand before you whole. * This is the stone
 which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head

V. 2. *The priests being grieved*—That the name of Jesus was preached to the people; especially they were offended at the doctrine of his resurrection; for as they had put him to death, his rising again proved him to be the *just one*, and so brought his *blood upon their heads*. The *priests* were grieved, lest their office and temple services should decline, and Christianity take root, through the preaching of the apostles, and their power of working miracles: *The captain of the temple*—Being concerned to prevent all sedition and disorder, *the Sadducees*—Being displeased, at the overturning all their doctrines, particularly with regard to the resurrection.

V. 4. *The number of the men*—Beside women and children, *were about five thousand*—So many did our Lord now feed at once with the bread from heaven!

V. 5. *Rulers, and elders, and scribes*—Who were eminent for power, for wisdom, and for learning.

V. 6. *Annas, who had been the high-priest, and Caiaphas, who was so then.*

V. 7. *By what name*—By what authority *have ye done this?*—They seem to speak ambiguously on purpose.

V. 8. *Then Peter filled with the Holy Ghost*—That moment. God moves his instruments, not when they please, but just when he sees it needful. *Ye rulers*—He gives them the honour due to their office.

V. 10. *Be it known to you all*—Probably the herald of God proclaimed this with a loud voice. *Whom hath God raised from the dead*—They knew in their own consciences that it was so. And tho' they had hired the soldiers to tell a most senseless and incredible tale to the contrary, (*Matt. xxviii. 12—15.*) yet it is observable, they did not, so far as we can learn, dare to plead it before Peter and John.

V. 12. *There*

* Psalm cxviii, 22.

12 of the corner. And there is salvation in no other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13 And seeing the boldness of Peter and John, and understanding that they were illiterate and uneducated men, they marvelled, and took

14 knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man who had been healed, standing with them, they had nothing

15 to say against *it*. But having ordered them to go out of the council, 16 they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these

men? For that indeed a signal miracle hath been wrought by them, 17 *is* manifest to all that dwell at Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. Yet

that it spread no farther among the people, let us severely threaten them, 18 that they speak no more to any man in this name. And having called

19 them, they charged them, Not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answering, said to them, Whether it be

just in the sight of God, to obey you rather than God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 And having threatened them again, they let *them* go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for they all glorified

V. 12. *There is no other name whereby we must be saved*—The apostle uses a beautiful gradation, from the temporal deliverance which had been wrought for the poor cripple, by the power of *Christ*, to that of a much nobler and more important kind, which is wrought by *Christ* for impotent and sinful souls. He therein follows the admirable custom of his great Lord and master, who continually took occasion from earthly to speak of spiritual things.

V. 13. *Illiterate and uneducated men*—Even by such men, (though not by such only) hath God in all ages caused his word to be preached before the world.

V. 17. *Yet that it spread no farther*—For they look upon it as a mere gangrene. So do all the world upon genuine Chris-

tianity. *Let us severely threaten them*—Great men, ye do nothing. They have a greater than you to flee to.

V. 18. *They charged them, Not to speak—Privately; nor teach—Publickly.*

V. 19. *Whether it be just to obey you rather than God, judge ye*—Was it not by the same spirit, that *Socrates*, when they were condemning him to death, for teaching the people, said, “O ye *Athenians*, I embrace and love you: but I will obey God rather than you. And if you would spare my life, on condition I should cease to teach my fellow-citizens, I would die a thousand times rather than accept the proposal.”

V. 21. *They all glorified God*—So much wiser were the people than those who were over them!

V. 24. The

22 God for that which was done. For the man on whom this miracle of healing had been wrought, was above forty years old.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and related

24 all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. And having

heard *it*, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said,

Lord, thou *art* the God who madest heaven and earth, and the

sea, and all that in them is: Who saidst by the mouth of thy

25 servant David, * Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine

26 vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the

rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and

the people of Israel, were gathered together against thy holy child

28 Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, To do whatsoever thy hand and thy

29 counsel before determined to be done. And now, Lord, behold their

threatenings, and give thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness,

30 While thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are

31 done through the name of thy holy child Jesus. And while they were

praying, the place in which they were assembled was shaken, and they

were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with

boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and

of one soul: and not so much as one said that ought of the things

V. 24. The sense is, Lord, thou hast all power. And thy word is fulfilled. Men do rage against thee. But it is in vain.

V. 27. *Whom thou hast anointed*—To be king of Israel.

V. 28. The sense is, But they could do no more than thou wast pleased to permit, according to thy *determinate counsel*, to save mankind by the sufferings of thy son. And what was needful for this end, thou didst *before determine* to permit to be done.

V. 30. *Thou stretchest forth thy hand*—Exertest thy power.

V. 31. *They were all filled*—Afresh; and *spake the word with boldness*—So their petition was granted.

V. 32. *And the multitude of them that believed*—Every individual person, *were of one heart and one soul*—Their love, their hopes, their passions joined; *And not so much as one*—In so great a multitude: this was a necessary consequence of that union of heart: *said that ought of the things which he had was his own*—It is impossible any one should, while all *were of one soul*. So long as that truly Christian love continued, they could not but *have all things common*.

V. 33. *And*

* Psalm ii. 1.

33 which he had, was his own, but they had all things common. And the apostles gave forth their testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and great grace was upon them all:
 34 For neither was there any one among them that wanted: for whosoever were possessors of houses or lands sold them, and brought the prices
 35 of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the feet of the apostles, and distribution was made to every one, according as any had need.
 36 And Joses, by the apostles surnamed Barnabas, which is, being
 37 interpreted, a son of consolation, a Levite, a Cyprian by birth, Having an estate, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

V. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a
 2 possession, And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy
 to *it*, and bringing a certain part, laid it at the feet of the apostles.
 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart, to lie to the

V. 33. *And great grace*—A large measure of the inward power of the Holy Ghost, *was upon them all*—Directing all their thoughts, words and actions.

V. 34. *For neither was there any one among them that wanted*—We may observe, this is added as the proof that *Great grace was upon them all*. And it was the immediate, necessary consequence of it: Yea, and must be, to the end of the world. In all ages and nations, the same cause, the same degree of grace, could not but in like circumstances, produce the same effect. *For whosoever were possessors of houses or lands sold them*—Not that there was any particular command for this. But there was great grace and great love; of which this was the natural fruit.

V. 35. *And distribution was made*—At first by the apostles themselves; afterwards by them whom they appointed.

V. 36. *A son of consolation*—Not only on

account of his so largely assisting the poor with his fortune; but also of those peculiar gifts of the spirit, whereby he was so well qualified, both to comfort and to exhort.

V. 37. *Having an estate*—Probably of a considerable value. It is not unlikely, that it was in *Cyprus*. Being a *Levite*, he had *no portion*, no distinct inheritance, *in Israel*.

V. 1. *But a certain man named Ananias*—It is certain, not a believer; for all that believed *were of one heart and of one soul*: probably, not baptized; but intending now to offer himself for baptism.

V. 2. *And bringing a certain part*—As if it had been the whole: perhaps, saying it was so.

V. 3. *To lie to the Holy Ghost*—Who is in us. *And to keep back*—Here was the first instance of it. This was the first attempt to bring propriety of goods into the Christian church.

4 Holy Ghost? And to keep back *part* of the price of the land? While
 it remained, did it not remain thine? And when it was sold, was it not in
 thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou
 5 hast not lied to men, but to God. And Ananias hearing these words,
 fell down and expired; and great fear came on all that heard these
 6 things. And the young men rising up, wound him up, and carrying
 7 *him* out, buried him. And it was about the space of three hours
 8 after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And
 Peter said to her, Tell me, if ye sold the land for so much? And
 9 she said, Yea, for so much. And Peter said to her, Why have ye agreed
 together, to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of them that
 have buried thy husband *are* at the door and shall carry thee out.
 10 And immediately she fell at his feet and expired; and the young
 men coming in, found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried her by
 11 her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon
 all that heard these things.

V. 4. *While it remained, did it not remain thine?*—It is true, *Whosoever* among the Christians (not one excepted) *had houses or lands sold them, and laid the price at the feet of the apostles.* But it was in his own choice, to be a Christian or not: and consequently either to sell his land or keep it. *And when it was sold, was it not in thy power?*—For it does not appear, that he professed himself a Christian, when he sold it. *Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart?*—So profanely to dissemble on so solemn an occasion? *Thou hast not lied to men only, but to God* also. Hence the Godhead of the Holy Ghost evidently appears: since lying to him (ver. 3.) is lying to God.

V. 5. *And Ananias fell down and expired*—And this severity was not only just, considering that complication of vain-glory, covetousness, fraud, and impiety, which this action contained; but it was also wise and gracious, as it would effectually deter any others from following his example. It was likewise a

convincing proof of the upright conduct of the apostles, in managing the sums with which they were intrusted: and in general of their divine mission. For none could imagine that *Peter* would have had the assurance to pronounce, and much less the power to execute such a sentence, if he had been guilty himself of a fraud of the same kind; or had been belying the Holy Ghost in the whole of his pretensions to be under his immediate direction.

V. 7. *About the space of three hours*—How precious a space! The woman had a longer time for repentance.

V. 8. *If ye sold the land for so much*—Naming the sum.

V. 11. *The church*—This is the first time it is mentioned: and here is a native specimen of a New Testament church; which is, a company of men, called by the gospel, grafted into *Christ* by baptism, animated by love, united by all kind of fellowship, and disciplined by the death of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*.

V. 12. *And*

12 And many signs and wonders were wrought among the people by the hands of the apostles: (and they were all with one accord in
 13 Solomon's portico: And none of the rest durst join themselves to
 14 them; but the people magnified them, And the more were multitudes
 15 both of men and women believing added to the Lord :) So that they brought out the sick along the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches that even the shadow of Peter coming by, might overshadow some of
 16 them. And multitudes also of the cities round about, came together to Jerusalem, bringing persons sick and troubled by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

17 But the high priest arising, and all that were with him, which was
 18 the sect of the Sadducees, were filled with zeal, And laid their hands
 19 on the apostles, and put them into the common prison. But an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, by night, and leading them out,
 20 said, Go, stand and speak in the temple the words of this life. And
 21 hearing this, they went into the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest being come, and they that were with him, called together the council, even the whole senate of the children of Israel,
 22 and sent to the prison, to have them brought. But when the officers came, they found them not in the prison; and returning they said,
 23 Truly we found the prison shut with all safety, and the keepers standing before the doors; but having opened *them*, we found no man within.
 24 When the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things,
 25 they doubted of them, what this should be? Then came one and told them, Behold the men whom ye put in prison, are standing in the
 26 temple, and teaching the people. Then the captain going with the

V. 12. *And they were all*—All the believers. *None of the rest*—No formalists or hypocrites, *durst join themselves*—In an outward shew only, like *Ananias and Sapphira*.

V. 14. But so much *the more were true believers added*, because unbelievers kept at a distance.

V. 17. *The high priest—and the sect of the Sadducees*—A goodly company for the priest! He, and these deniers of any angel or resur-

rection, *were filled with zeal*—Angry, bitter, persecuting zeal.

V. 20. *The words of this*—That is, these words of life: words which shew the way to life everlasting.

V. 23. *We found the prison shut*—The angel probably had shut the doors again.

V. 24. *They doubted what this should be*—They were even at their wits end. The world in persecuting the children of God, entangle themselves in numberless difficulties.

V. 28. *Did*

officers brought them, not with violence, for they feared the people,
 27 lest they should be stoned. And having brought them, they set *them*
 28 before the council. And the high priest asked them, Did not we strictly
 command you, Not to teach in this name? And lo, ye have filled
 Jerusalem with your doctrine, and would bring the blood of this
 29 man upon us. Then Peter and the *other* apostles answering said,
 30 We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our
 fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging *him* on a tree.
 31 Him hath God exalted, a Prince and a Saviour with his right-hand,
 32 to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are
 witnesses of these things, and also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath
 33 given to them that obey him. When they heard this, they were
 34 cut *to the heart*, and took counsel to slay them. But a certain
 Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honour by all
 the people, rising up in the council, ordered, to put the men out
 35 a little space: And said to them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to
 36 yourselves, what ye are about to do, touching these men. For

V. 28. *Did we not strictly command you, Not to teach?*—See the poor cunning of the enemies of the gospel. They make laws and interdicts at their pleasure, which those who obey God cannot but break: and then take occasion thereby, to censure and punish the innocent, as guilty.—*Ye would bring the blood of this man upon us*—An artful and invidious word. The apostles did not desire to accuse any man. They simply declared the naked truth.

V. 29. *Then Peter*, in the name of all the apostles, *said*—He does not now give them the titles of honour, which he did before, (ch. iv. 8.) but enters directly upon the subject, and justifies what he had done. This is as it were, a continuation of that discourse, but with an increase of severity.

V. 30. *Hath raised up Jesus*—Of the seed of *David*, according to the promises made to our fathers.

V. 31. *Him hath God exalteth*—From the grave to heaven; *To give repentance*—Whereby *Jesus* is received as a prince; *and forgiveness of sins*—Whereby he is received as a Saviour. Hence some infer, that repentance and faith are as mere gifts as remission of sins. Not so: for man co-operates in the former but not in the latter. God alone forgives sins.

V. 32. *And also the Holy Ghost*—A much greater witness.

V. 34. *But a certain Pharisee*—And as such, believing the resurrection of the dead; *a doctor*, or teacher, *of the law*—That is a Scribe, and indeed one of the highest rank; *Had in honour by all the people*—Except the Sadducees; *rising up in the council*—So God can raise defenders of his servants, whensoever and wheresoever he pleases.

V. 36. *Before these days*—He prudently mentions the facts first, and then makes the inference.

V. 38. *Let*

before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom was joined a number of men, about four hundred, who was slain, and all who hearkened to him, were scattered and came to
 37 nothing. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the enrolment, and drew away much people after him; he also
 38 perished, and all who had hearkened unto him, were dispersed. And now I say to you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought.
 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, *and take heed* lest ye be
 40 found even fighting against God. And to him they agreed. And having called the apostles, and scourged *them*, they charged *them* not
 41 to speak in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were
 42 counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ daily, in the temple, and from house to house.

VI. Now in these days, the disciples multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows

V. 38. *Let them alone*—In a cause, which is manifestly good, we should immediately join. In a cause, on the other hand, which is manifestly evil, we should immediately oppose. But in a sudden, new, doubtful occurrence, this advice is eminently useful. *If this counsel or this work*—He seems to correct himself, as if it were some sudden work, rather than a counsel or design. And so it was. For the apostles had no counsel, plan, or design of their own; but were mere instruments in the hand of God, working just as he led them, from day to day.

V. 41. *Rejoicing—to suffer shame*—This is a sure mark of the truth; joy in affliction, such is true, deep, pure.

V. 1. *There arose a murmuring*—Here was the first breach made, on those who were before of one heart, and of one soul. Partiality crept in unawares on some and murmuring on others. Ah Lord! how

short a time did pure, genuine, undefiled Christianity remain in the world! O the depth! How unsearchable are thy counsels! Marvellous are thy ways, O king of saints! The *Hellenists* were *Jews* born out of *Palestine*. They were so called, because they used the *Greek* as their mother tongue.

In this partiality of the *Hebrews*, and murmuring of the *Hellenists*, were the seeds of a general persecution sown. Did God ever in any age or country, withdraw his restraining providence, and let loose the world upon the *Christians*, till there was a cause among themselves? Is not an open, general persecution, always both penal and medical? A punishment of those that will not accept of milder reproofs, as well as a medicine to heal their sickness? And at the same time a means both of purifying and strengthening those whose heart is still right with God?

V. 2. *If*

2 were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve calling
 the multitude of the disciples together, said, It is not right, that we
 3 should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Therefore, brethren,
 look out from among you seven men of good report, full of the
 Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we will set over this business.
 4 But we will constantly attend to prayer, and to the ministry of the
 5 word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they
 chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and
 Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas,
 6 and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the
 7 apostles, and having prayed, they laid their hands upon them. And
 the word of God grew, and the number of disciples was multiplied in
 Jerusalem greatly: and a great company of the priests were obedient to
 the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and
 9 miracles among the people. But there arose certain of the synagogue,

V. 2. *It is not right that we should leave the word of God and serve tables*—In the first church, the primary business of apostles, evangelists, and bishops, was to preach the word of God; the secondary, to take a kind of paternal care (the church being then like a family,) for the food, especially of the poor, the strangers, and the widows. Afterwards, the deacons of both sexes, were constituted for this latter business. And whatever time they had to spare from this, they employed in works of spiritual mercy. But their proper office was, to take care of the poor. And when some of them afterwards preached the gospel, they did this not by virtue of the deaconship, but of another commission, that of evangelists, which they probably received, not before, but after they were appointed *deacons*. And it is not unlikely, that others were chosen *deacons*, or *stewards*, in their room, when any of these commenced *evangelists*.

V. 3. *Of good report*—That there may be no room to suspect them of partiality or

injustice. *Full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom*—For it is not a light matter, to dispense even the temporal goods of the church. To do even this well, a large measure both of the gifts and grace of God is requisite. *Whom we will set over this business*—It would have been happy for the church, had its ordinary ministers in every age, taken the same care to act in concert with the people committed to their charge, which the apostles themselves, extraordinary as their office was, did on this and other occasions.

V. 4. *We will constantly attend to prayer, and to the ministry of the word*—This is doubtless the proper business of a Christian bishop: to speak to God, in prayer; to men, in preaching his word, as an ambassador for *Christ*.

V. 5. *And they chose*—It seems seven *Hellenists*, as their names shew. *And Nicolas a proselyte*—To whom the proselytes would the more readily apply.

V. 7. *And the word of God grew*—The hinderances being removed.

V. 9. *There arose certain of the synagogue which*

which is called *that* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen.
 10 And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by
 11 which he spake. Then they suborned men who said, We have heard
 him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God.
 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and
 coming upon *him*, dragged him away, and brought *him* to the coun-
 13 cil, And set up false witnesses who said, This man ceaseth not to speak
 14 words against the holy place and the law. For we have heard him
 say, That this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and change
 15 the rites which Moses delivered us. And all that were sitting in
 the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face, as the face
 of an angel.

VII. Then said the high priest, Are these things so? And he said, Men,
 2 brethren, and fathers, hearken. The God of glory appeared to our

which is called—It was one of the same synagogue which consisted of these several nations. *Saul of Cilicia* was doubtless a member of it; whence it is not at all improbable, that *Gamaliel* presided over it. *Libertines*—So they were stiled, whose fathers were once slaves, and afterwards made free. This was the case of many Jews, who had been taken captive by the Romans.

V. 14. *We have heard him say*—So they might. But yet the consequence they drew would not follow.

V. 15. *As the face of an angel*—Covered with supernatural lustre. They reckoned his preaching of *Jesus* to be the *Christ*. was destroying *Moses* and the law; and God bears witness to him, with the same glory as he did to *Moses*, when he gave the law by him.

V. 2. *And he said*—*St. Stephen* had been accused of blasphemy against *Moses*, and even against God; and of speaking against the temple and the law, threatening that *Jesus* would destroy the one, and change

the other. In answer to this accusation, rehearsing as it were the articles of his historical creed, he speaks of God with high reverence, and a grateful sense of a long series of acts of goodness to the *Israelites*, and of *Moses* with great respect, on account of his important and honourable employments under God: of the temple, with regard, as being built to the honour of God; yet not with such superstition as the *Jews*; putting them in mind, that no temple could comprehend God. And he was going on, no doubt, when he was interrupted by their clamour, to speak to the last point, the destruction of the temple, and the change of the law by *Christ*. *Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken*—The sum of his discourse is this; I acknowledge the glory of God revealed to the fathers, ver. 2; the calling of *Moses*, ver. 34. &c. the dignity of the law, ver. 8, 38, 44; the holiness of *this place*, ver. 7, 45, 47. And indeed the law is more antient than the temple; the promise more antient than the law. For God shewed himself the God of
 Abraham,

Father Abraham, * being in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,
 3 And said to him, Come out of thy country, and from thy kindred,
 4 and come into a land, which I will shew thee. And coming out
 of the land of the Chaldeans, he dwelt in Haran. And from thence,
 after his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein
 5 ye now dwell. And he gave him no inheritance in it, no, not to
 set his foot on; yet he promised to give it him for a possession, even
 6 to his seed after him, when he had no child: And God spake thus:
 That † his seed should sojourn in a strange land (and they will in-
 7 slave them and treat *them* evil) four hundred years. And the

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their children freely (ver. 2. &c. 9, &c. 17, &c. 32, 34, 45.) and they shewed faith and obedience to God, (ver. 4, 20, &c. 23.) particularly by their regard for the law, (ver. 8.) and the promised land, ver. 16.) Meantime God never confined his presence to this one place or to the observers of the law. For he hath been acceptably worshipped, before the law was given, or the temple built, and out of this land. (ver. 2, 9, 33, 44.) And that our fathers and their posterity were not tied down to this land, their various sojournings (ver. 4, &c. 14, 29, 44.) and exile (ver. 43.) shew. But you and your fathers have always been evil; (ver. 9.) have withstood *Moses*, (ver. 25, &c. 39, &c.) have despised the land, (ver. 39.) forsaken God, (ver. 40, &c.) superstitiously honoured the temple, (ver. 48.) resisted God and his Spirit, (ver. 50.) killed the prophets and the *Messiah* himself, (ver. 51.) and kept not the law for which ye contend. (ver. 53.) Therefore God is not bound to you; much less to you alone. And truly this solemn testimony of *Stephen*, is most worthy of his character, as *a man full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, and power*: in which though he does not advance so many regular propositions, contradictory to those of his adversaries, yet he closely and nervously answers them all.

Nor can we doubt but he would, from these premises, have drawn inferences touching the destruction of the temple, the abrogation of the *Mosaic* law, the punishment of that rebellious people, and above all, touching *Jesus of Nazareth*, the true *Messiah*, had not his discourse been interrupted by the clamours of the multitude, stopping their ears, and rushing upon him. *Men, brethren, and fathers*—All who are here present, whether ye are my equals in years, or of more advanced age. The word which in this and many other places is rendered *men* is a mere expletive. *The God of glory*—The glorious God appeared to *Abraham*, before he dwelt in Haran—Therefore *Abraham* knew God, long before he was in this land.

V. 3. *Which I will shew thee*—*Abraham* knew not where he went.

V. 4. *After his father was dead*—While *Terah* lived, *Abraham* lived partly with him, partly in *Canaan*: but after he died, altogether in *Canaan*.

V. 5. *No, not to set his foot on*—For the field mentioned, ver. 16. he did not receive by a divine donation, but bought it; even thereby shewing that he was a stranger in the land.

V. 7. *They shall serve me*—Not the *Egyptians*.

V. 8. *And*

* Gen. xii. 1. † Gen. xv. 13.

nation to whom they shall be in bondage, will I judge, said God. And
 8 after that, they shall come forth, and serve me in this place. † And
 he gave him the covenant of circumcision, and so he begat Isaac,
 and circumcised him the eighth day, and Isaac Jacob, and Jacob the
 9 twelve patriarchs. * And the patriarchs moved with envy, sold Joseph
 10 into Egypt; but God was with him, And delivered him out of all
 his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of
 Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he appointed him governor over Egypt,
 11 and all his house. Now there came a famine over all the land of
 12 Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers found no
 13 sustenance. But Jacob hearing there was corn in Egypt, sent our
 fathers first. And the second time, Joseph was made known to his
 14 brethren, and Joseph's kindred was made known to Pharaoh. Then
 Joseph sending, called thither his father Jacob and all his kindred,
 15 seventy-five souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he
 16 and our fathers. And were carried over to Shechem, and laid in

V. 8. *And so he begat Isaac*—After the covenant was given, of which circumcision was the seal.

V. 9. *But God was with him*—Though he was not in this land.

V. 12. *Sent our fathers first*—Without Benjamin.

V. 14. *Seventy-five souls*—So the seventy interpreters (whom St. Stephen follows, one son and a grandson of Manasseh, and three children of Ephraim, being added to the seventy persons, mentioned, Gen. xlvi. 27.

V. 16. *And were carried over to Shechem*—It seems, that St. Stephen rapidly running over so many circumstances of history, has not leisure, nor was it needful where they were so well known, to recite them all distinctly. Therefore he here contracts into one, two different sepulchres, places and purchases, so as in the former history, to name the buyer, omitting the seller; in the latter to name the seller, omitting the buyer. Abraham bought a burying-place of the

children of Heth, Gen. xxiii. There Jacob was buried. Jacob bought a field of the children of Hamor. There Joseph was buried. You see here how St. Stephen contracts these two purchases into one. This concise manner of speaking, strange as it seems to us, was common among the Hebrews: particularly when in a case notoriously known, the speaker mentioned but part of the story, and left the rest, which would have interrupted the current of his discourse, to be supplied in the mind of the hearer. *And laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought*—The first land which these strangers bought was for a sepulchre. They sought for a country in heaven. Perhaps the whole sentence might be rendered thus: *So Jacob went down into Egypt and died, he and our fathers, and were carried over to Shechem, and laid by the son (that is, descendants) of Hamor the father of Shechem, in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money.*

4 A 2

V. 18. *Another*

† Gen. xvii. 10. * Gen. xxxvii. 28.

the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money, of the
 17 sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem. † And when the time of
 the promise which God hath sworn to Abraham, drew near, the people
 18 increased and multiplied in Egypt, Till another king arose, who had not
 19 known Joseph. He dealing subtilly with our kindred, evil intreated
 our fathers, by causing their *male* infants to be exposed, that they might
 20 not live. ‡ In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding
 21 beautiful, who was nursed three months in his father's house. And
 when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and brought
 22 him up for her own son. And Moses was educated in all the wisdom
 23 of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. But
 24 when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit
 his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one wronged, he de-
 25 fended and avenged him that was oppressed, smiting the Egyptian. For
 he supposed his brethren would have understood, that God would de-
 26 liver them by his hand; but they understood *it* not. And the next day
 he shewed himself to them, as they were quarrelling, and would have
 27 persuaded them to peace, saying, Men, ye are brethren: why do ye
 wrong one another? But he that wronged his neighbour, thrust him
 28 away, saying, Who appointed thee a prince and a judge over us? Wilt
 29 thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? And Moses fled at
 that saying, and was a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he begat
 30 two sons. * And forty years being expired, the angel of the Lord ap-

V. 18. *Another king*—Probably of another family.

V. 19. *Exposed*—Cast out to perish by hunger, or wild beasts.

V. 20. *In which time*—A sad, but a reasonable time.

V. 21. *Pharaoh's daughter took him*—By which means, being designed for a kingdom, he had all those advantages of education, which he could not have had, if he had not been exposed.

V. 22. *In all the wisdom of the Egyptians*—Which was then celebrated in all the world, and for many ages after. *And mighty in words*—Deep, solid, weighty, though not of a ready utterance.

V. 23. *It came into his heart*—Probably by an impulse from God.

V. 24. *Seeing one wronged*—Probably by one of the task-masters.

V. 25. *They understood it not*—Such was their stupidity and sloth: which made him afterwards unwilling to go to them.

V. 26. *He shewed himself*—Of his own accord unexpectedly.

V. 27. *Who appointed thee*—"Under the pretence of the want of a call by man, the instruments of God are often rejected."

V. 30. *The angel*—The Son of God; as appears from his styling himself *Jehovah*. *In a flame of fire*—Signifying the majesty of God then present. V. 33. *Then*

† Exod. i. 7. ‡ Exod. ii. 2. * Exod. iii. 2.

- 31 peared to him, in the wilderness, in a flame of fire in a bush. And Moses
 seeing it, wondered at the sight. But as he drew near to behold it, the
 32 voice of the Lord came to him, I *am* the God of thy fathers, the God of
 Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses
 33 trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Loose thy
 shoes from thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground.
 34 I have surely seen the evil treatment of my people which is in Egypt,
 and have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them.
 35 And now come; I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses, whom they
 refused, saying, Who appointed thee a prince and a judge, the same did
 God send, *to be* a ruler and a deliverer, by the hand of the angel, who
 36 appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, doing wonders and
 signs, in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness
 forty years.
 37 This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, † The Lord
 your God will raise you up, out of your brethren, a prophet like me:
 38 him shall ye hear. ‡ This is he that was in the church in the wilder-
 ness, with the angel who spoke to him in mount Sinai, and *with* our
 39 fathers; who received the living oracles to give to us: § Whom our

V. 33. *Then said the Lord, Loose thy shoes*
 —An antient token of reverence; *for the*
place is holy ground—The holiness of places
 depends on the peculiar presence of God
 there.

V. 35. *This Moses whom they refused*—
 Namely, forty years before. Probably,
 not they, but their fathers did it, and God
 imputes it to them. So God frequently
 imputes the sins of the fathers, to those of
 their children who are of the same spirit.
Him did God send to be a deliverer—Which
 is much more than a judge; *by the hand of*
 —That is, by means of *the angel*—This
 angel who spake to *Moses* on mount *Sinai*
 expressly called himself *Jehovah*, a name
 which cannot, without the highest pre-
 sumption, be assumed by any created
 angel, since *he whose name alone is Jehovah,*
is the Most High over all the earth (Psalms

lxxxiii. 18.) It was therefore the Son of
 God who delivered the law to *Moses*, under
 the character of *Jehovah*, and who is here
 spoken of, as the angel of the covenant,
 in respect of his mediatorial office.

V. 37. *The Lord will raise you up a*
prophet—St. *Stephen* here shews, that there
 is no opposition between *Moses* and *Christ*.

V. 38. *This is he*—*Moses*. *With the angel,*
and with our fathers—As a mediator be-
 tween them. *Who received the living oracles*
 —Every period beginning with, *And the*
Lord said unto Moses, is properly an oracle.
 But the oracles here intended are chiefly,
 the ten commandments. These are termed,
living because all *the word of God*, applied
 by his spirit, *is living and powerful*. Heb.
 iv. 12. enlightening the eyes, rejoicing the
 heart, converting the soul, raising the
 dead.

V. 40. *Make*

† Deut. xviii. 15. ‡ Exod. xix. 3. § Exod. xxxiii. 1.

40 fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back into Egypt, Saying to Aaron, Make us gods to go before us ; for this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know
 41 not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands.
 42 And God turned and gave them up, to worship the host of heaven ; as it is written in the book of the prophets, * Have ye offered victims and sacrifices to me, for forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?
 43 Yea, ye took up the shrine of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them : and I will carry you
 44 away beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, as he had appointed who spake to Moses, to make
 45 it according to the model which he had seen ; † Which also our fathers having received, brought in with Joshua into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out from the face of our fathers, till the

V. 40. *Make us gods to go before us*—Back into *Egypt*.

V. 41. *And they made a calf*—In imitation of *Apis*, the Egyptian God : and *rejoiced in the works of their hands*—In the God they had made.

V. 42. *God turned*—From them in anger ; and *gave them up*—Frequently, from the time of the golden calf, to the time of *Amos*, and afterwards. *The host of heaven*—The stars are called an army or host, because of their number, order, and powerful influence. *In the book of the prophets*—Of the twelve prophets, which the Jews always wrote together in one book. *Have ye offered*—The passage of *Amos* referred to (ch. v. 25, &c.) consists of two parts ; of which the former confirms ver. 41. of the sin of the people, the latter, the beginning of ver. 42. concerning their punishment. *Have ye offered to me*—They had offered many sacrifices ; but God did not accept them as offered to him ; because they sacrificed to idols also ; and did not sacrifice to him with an upright heart.

V. 43. *Ye took up*—Probably not long after the golden calf : but secretly ; else *Moses* would have mentioned it. *The shrine*—A small portable chapel, in which was the image of their God. *Moloch* was the planet *Mars*, which they worshipped under an human shape. *Remphan*, that is, *Saturn*, they represented by a star. *And I will carry you beyond Babylon*—That is, beyond *Damascus* (which is the word in *Amos*) and *Babylon*. This was fulfilled by the king of *Assyria*, 2 Kings xvii. 6.

V. 44. *Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony*—*The testimony* was properly, The two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments were written. Hence the ark which contained them, is frequently called *the ark of the testimony* : and the whole tabernacle in this place. *The tabernacle of the testimony—according to the model which he had seen*—When he was caught up in the visions of God, on the mount.

V. 45. *Which our fathers having received*—From their ancestors ; *brought into the possession of the Gentiles*—Into the land, which

* Amos v. 25. † Josh. iii. 14.

46 days of David: Who found favour in the sight of God, and petitioned
 47 to find an habitation for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him
 48 a house. Yet the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.
 as saith the prophet, * Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool,
 49 What house will ye build me, saith the Lord: or what is the place of my
 50 rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiff-necked and un-
 51 circumcised in heart and ears, ye always resist the Holy Ghost: as your
 52 fathers, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers per-
 secuted? And they have slain them that foretold the coming of the just
 53 one, of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers: Who
 have received the law by the administration of angels, and have not kept
 54 it. And hearing these things they were cut to the heart, and gnashed
 55 their teeth upon him. But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looking sted-
 fastly up to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the
 56 right-hand of God: And said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the

which the *Gentiles* possess before. So that God's favour is not a necessary consequence of inhabiting this land. All along St. *Stephen* intimates two things, 1. That God always loved good men in every land: 2. That he never loved bad men even in this.

V. 46. *Who petitioned to find an habitation for the God of Jacob*—But he did not obtain his petition. For God remained without any temple, till *Solomon* built him a house. Observe how wisely the word is chosen, with respect to what follows.

V. 48. *Yet the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*—As *Solomon* declared at the very dedication of the temple, 1 *Kings* viii. 27. *The Most High*—Whom as such no building can contain.

V. 49. *What is the place of my rest?*—Have I need to rest?

V. 51. *Ye stiff-necked*—Not bowing the neck to God's yoke; and *uncircumcised in heart*—So they shewed themselves, ver. 54. and *ears*—As they shewed, ver. 57. So far were they from receiving the word of God into their hearts, that they would not hear

it even with their ears. *Ye*—and your fathers, *always*—As often as ever ye are called, *resist the Holy Ghost*—Testifying by the prophets of *Jesus*, and the whole truth. This is the sum of what he had shewn at large.

V. 53. *Who have received the law, by the administration of angels*—God, when he gave the law on mount *Sinai*, was attended with thousands of his angels, *Gal.* iii. 19 *Psalms* lxxviii. 17.

V. 55. *But he, looking stedfastly up to heaven, saw the glory of God*—Doubtless he saw such a glorious representation, God miraculously operating on his imagination, as on *Ezekiel's*, when he sat in his house at *Babylon*, and saw *Jerusalem*, and seemed to himself transported thither, ch. viii. 1—4. And probably other martyrs, when called to suffer the last extremity, have had extraordinary assistance of some similar kind.

V. 56. *I see the son of man standing*—As it were just ready to receive him. Otherwise he is said to sit at the right-hand of God.

V. 57. *They*

* *Isaiah* lxvi. 1.

57 Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried with
 a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one
 58 accord, And casting *him* out of the city, stoned *him*: and the witnesses
 laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man, whose name was
 59 Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, re-
 60 ceive my spirit. And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, Lord,
 lay not this sin to their charge. And having said this, he fell asleep:
 And Saul was consenting to his death.

VIII. And at that time there arose a great persecution against the church
 which was in Jerusalem. And they were all dispersed through the countries
 2 of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men buried
 3 Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul made havock
 of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women,
 4 committed *them* to prison. Therefore they that were dispersed went
 every where, preaching the word.

V. 57. *They rushed upon him*—Before any sentence passed.

V. 58. *The witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul*—O Saul, couldst thou have believed, if one had told thee, that thou thyself shouldst be stoned in the same cause? And shouldst triumph in committing thy foul likewise to that Jesus whom thou art now blaspheming? His dying prayer reached thee, as well as many others. And the martyr Stephen and Saul the persecutor (afterwards his brother both in faith and martyrdom) are now joined in everlasting friendship, and dwell together in the happy company of those, who *have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb*.

V. 59. *And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*—This is the literal translation of the words, the name of God not being in the original. Nevertheless such a solemn prayer to Christ, in which a departing soul is thus committing into his hands, is such an act of worship, as no good man could have paid to

a mere creature: Stephen here worshipping Christ, in the very same manner in which Christ worshipped the father on the cross.

V. 1. *At that time there arose a great persecution against the church*—Their adversaries having tasted blood, were the more eager. *And they were all dispersed*—Not all the church: if so, who would have remained, for the apostles to teach, or Saul to persecute? But *all* the teachers *except the apostles*, who, though in the most danger, staid with the flock.

V. 2. *Devout men*—Who feared God more than persecution. And yet, were they not of little faith? Else they would not have *made so great lamentation*.

V. 3. *Saul made havock of the church*—Like some furious beast of prey. So the Greek word properly signifies. *Men and women*—Regarding neither age nor sex.

V. 4. *Therefore they that were dispersed went every where*—These very words are resumed, after as it were a long parenthesis, ch. xi. 19. and the thread of the story continued.

V. 5. *Stephen*

5 And Philip coming down to a city of Samaria, preached Christ to
 6 them. And the people with one accord gave heed to the things which
 7 Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean
 spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that had them, and
 8 many sick of the palsy and lame were healed. And there was great joy
 9 in that city. But a certain man, named Simon, had been before in the
 city, using magic, and astonishing the Samaritans, saying, that he was
 10 some great one. To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the
 11 greatest, saying, this man is the great power of God. They gave heed to
 12 him, because he had a long time astonished them with witchcraft. But
 when they believed Philip, preaching the things of the kingdom of God,
 and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
 13 And Simon himself believed also: and being baptized, he continued with
 Philip, and was astonished, beholding the signs and mighty miracles
 14 which were done. And the apostles who were at Jerusalem, hearing
 that Samaria had received the word of God, sent to them Peter and
 15 John: Who being come down, prayed for them, that they might
 16 receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them:
 17 only they had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they
 18 laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And Simon
 19 seeing that through laying on of the hands of the apostles the Holy
 Ghost was given, offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power,
 20 that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But
 Peter said to him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought

V. 5. *Stephen*—Being taken away, *Philip* his next colleague, (not the apostle) rises in his place.

V. 9. *A certain man—using magic*—So there was such a thing as witchcraft *once!* In *Asia* at least, if not in *Europe* or *America*.

V. 12. *But when they believed*—What Philip preached, they then saw and felt the real power of God, and submitted thereto.

V. 13. *And Simon believed*—That is, was convinced of the truth.

V. 14. *And the apostles hearing that Samaria*—The inhabitants of that country,

had received the word of God—By faith, *sent Peter and John*—He that sends must be either superior, or at least equal to him that is sent. It follows, that the college of the apostles was equal, if not superior to *Peter*.

V. 15. *The Holy Ghost*—In his miraculous gifts? Or his sanctifying graces? Probably in both.

V. 18. *Simon offered them money*—And hence the procuring any ministerial function, or ecclesiastical benefice by money is termed *Simony*.

21 to purchase the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor
 22 lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent
 therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought
 23 of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I see thou art in the gall of
 24 bitterness, and the bond of iniquity. And Simon answering said, Pray
 ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken,
 25 may come upon me. They then, having testified and spoken the word
 of the Lord, returned toward Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many
 villages of the Samaritans.

26 And an angel of the Lord spake to Philip, saying, Arise, and go
 toward the south by the way leading down from Jerusalem to Gaza,
 27 which is desert. And he arose and went. And lo an Ethiopian, an
 eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,
 who was over all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,
 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read the prophet Isaiah. Then
 29 the Spirit said to Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. And
 30 Philip running to him, heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said,

V. 21. *Thou hast neither part*—By purchase, *nor lot*—Given gratis, *in this matter*—This gift of God. *For thy heart is not right before God*—Probably St. Peter discerned this, long before he declared it; although it does not appear, that God gave to any of the apostles an universal power of discerning the hearts of all they conversed with; any more than an universal power of healing all the sick they came near. This we are sure Paul had not; though he was not inferior to the chief of the apostles. Otherwise he would not have suffered the illness of *Epaphroditus* to have brought him *so near to death* (*Phil. ii. 25—27.*) Nor have left so useful a fellow-labourer as *Trophimus sick at Miletus*, *2 Tim. iv. 20.*

V. 22. *Repent*—*if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee*—Without all doubt if he had repented, he would have been forgiven. The doubt was, Whether he would repent? *Thou art in the gall of bitterness*—In the highest degree of wickedness, which is bitterness, that is, misery to

the soul; *and in the bond of iniquity*—Fast bound therewith.

V. 26. *The way which is desert*—There were two ways from Jerusalem to Gaza; one desert, the other through a more populous country.

V. 27. *An eunuch*—Chief officers were antiently called *eunuchs*, though not always literally such; because such used to be chief ministers in the eastern courts. *Candace, queen of the Ethiopians*—So all the queens of *Ethiopia* were called.

V. 28. *Sitting in his chariot, he read the prophet Isaiah*—God meeteth those that remember him in his ways. It is good to read, hear, seek information even in a journey. Why should we not redeem all our time?

V. 30. *And Philip running to him, said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*—He did not begin about the weather, news, or the like. In speaking for God, we may frequently come to the point at once, without circumlocution.

V. 31. *He*

31 Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, unless
 some one guide me? And he desired Philip to come up, and sit with him.
 32 The portion of scripture which he was reading was this, * He was led as
 a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so he
 33 opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away;
 and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the
 34 earth. And the eunuch answering Philip, said, I pray thee, of whom
 35 speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then
 Philip opening his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached
 36 Jesus to him, And as they went on the way, they came to a certain
 water. And the eunuch said, Behold water: what hindereth me to be
 37 baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou
 mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of
 38 God. And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went
 down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized
 39 him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of
 the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more;
 40 and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus:
 and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to
 Cæsarea.

V. 31. *He desired Philip to come up and sit with him*—Such was his modesty, and thirst after instruction.

V. 32. *The portion of scripture*—By reading that very chapter, the fifty-third of *Isaiah*, that very Jews, yea, and *Atheists* have been converted. Some of them history records. God knoweth them all.

V. 33. *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away*—That is, when he was a man, he had no justice shewn him. To take away a person's judgment, is a proverbial phrase for oppressing him. *And who shall declare, or count, his generation*—That is, who can number his seed, (*Isaiah* liii. 10.) which he hath purchased by laying down his life?

V. 36. *And as they went on the way, they came to a certain water*—Thus even the circumstances of the journey, were under the direction of God. The kingdom of God

suits itself to external circumstances, without any violence, as air yields to all bodies, and yet pervades all. *What hindereth me to be baptized?*—Probably he had been circumcised: otherwise *Cornelius* would not have been the first fruits of the *Gentiles*.

V. 38. *And they both went down*—Out of the chariot. It does not follow that he was baptized by immersion. The text neither affirms nor intimates any thing concerning it.

V. 39. *The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip*—Carried him away with a miraculous swiftness, without any action or labour of his own. This had befallen several of the prophets.

V. 40. *But Philip was found at Azotus*—Probably none saw him, from his leaving the eunuch, till he was there.

IX. But * Saul still breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, going to the high priest, desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogue, that if he found any of this way, he might bring both men and women bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he drew near Damascus; and suddenly there shone about him a light from heaven. And falling to the earth, he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. *It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.* And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* to him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee, what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood astonished, hearing the noise, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and his eyes being opened, he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias, And the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias; And he said,

V. 2. *Bound*—By the connivance, if not authority, of the governor, under *Aretas* the King. See ver. 14. 24.

V. 3. *And suddenly*—When God suddenly and vehemently attacks a sinner, it is the highest act of mercy. So *Saul*, when his rage was come to the height, is taught not to breath slaughter. And what was wanting in time to confirm him in his discipleship, is compensated by the inexpressible terror he sustained. By this also the suddenly constituted apostle, was guarded against the grand snare into which novices are apt to fall.

V. 4. *He heard a voice*—Severe, yet full of grace.

V. 5. *To kick against the goads*—Is a *Syriac* proverb, expressing an attempt that brings nothing but pain.

V. 6. *It shall be told thee*—So God himself sends *Saul* to be taught by a man, as the angel does *Cornelius*. ch. x. 5. Admirable condescension! That the Lord deals with us by men, like ourselves.

V. 7. *The men—stood*—Having risen before *Saul*; for they also fell to the ground, ch. xxvi. 14. It is probable they all journeyed on foot. *Hearing the noise*—But not an articulate voice. And seeing the light, but not *Jesus* himself. ch. xxvi. 13. &c.

V. 9. *And he was three days*—An important season! So long he seems to have been in the pangs of the new birth. *Without sight*—By scales growing over his eyes, to intimate to him the blindness of the state he had been in, to impress him with a deeper sense of the almighty power of *Christ*, and to turn his thoughts inward, while he was less capable of conversing with outward objects. This was likewise a manifest token to others, of what had happened to him in his journey, and ought to have humbled and convinced those bigoted *Jews*, to whom he had been sent from the *Sanhedrim*.

V. 11. *Behold, he is praying*—He was shewn thus to *Ananias*.

V. 12. *A man*

* Ch. xxii. 3, &c. Ch. xxvi. 9, &c.

Behold *I am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* to him, Arise, go into the street called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas, for *one* named
 12 Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he is praying. And he hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he
 13 may recover his sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.
 14 And here also he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that
 15 call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go: for he is a chosen vessel to me, to bear my name before nations and kings, and the chil-
 16 dren of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for
 17 my name's sake. And Ananias went and entered into the house, and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord hath sent me,
 18 Jesus who appeared to thee in the way thou camest, that thou mayest
 19 recover thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately as it were scales fell from his eyes, and he recovered his
 sight, and arose and was baptized. And having received food he was strengthened.
 20 And he was certain days with the disciples in Damascus: And straight-
 way he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.
 21 But all that heard were amazed, and said. Is not this he who destroyed those that call on this name at Jerusalem? And came hither for this
 22 intent, that he might bring them bound to the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at
 23 Damascus, proving that this is the Christ. And when many days were
 24 fulfilled, the Jews consulted together to kill him, But their lying in wait was known by Saul: and they guarded the gates day and night to kill

V. 12. *A man called Ananias*—His name also was revealed to *Saul*.

V. 13. *But he answered*—How natural is it to *reason* against God!

V. 14. *All that call on thy name*—That is, all Christians.

V. 15. *He is a chosen vessel to bear thy name*—That is, to testify of me. It is undeniable, that some men are unconditionally chosen or elected, to do some works for God.

V. 16. *For I*—Do thou as thou art commanded, I will take care of the rest; *will*

shew him—In fact, through the whole course of his ministry. *How great things he must suffer*—So far will he be now from persecuting others.

V. 17. *The Lord hath sent me*—Ananias does not tell *Saul* all which *Christ* had said concerning him. It was not expedient, that he should know yet to how great a dignity he was called.

V. 24. *They guarded the gates day and night*—That is, the governor did, at their request, 2 Cor. xi. 32.

V. 26. *And*

25 him. Then the disciples taking him by night, let *him* down the wall in
 26 a basket. And coming to Jerusalem, he endeavoured to join himself to
 the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was
 27 a disciple. But Barnabas taking him, brought *him* to the apostles, and
 declared to them, How he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had
 spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus, in the
 28 name of Jesus. And he was with them, coming in and going out at
 29 Jerusalem. And preaching boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, he
 spoke and disputed with the Hellenists: but they attempted to kill him;
 30 *Which* the brethren knowing, brought him down to Cesarea, and sent
 31 him forth to Tarsus. Then the church through all Judea, and Galilee,
 and Samaria had peace: and being built up, and walking in the fear of
 God, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, *was* multiplied.

32 And as Peter passed through all *parts*, he came down also to the fairs
 33 that dwelt at Lydda. And he found there a certain man named Eneas,
 34 who had kept his bed eight years, being ill of a palsy. And Peter said
 to him, Eneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee, Arise, and make thy bed.
 35 And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt in Lydda and Sharon
 saw *him*, and turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa, a certain disciple named Tabitha, which
 is by interpretation Dorcas; this woman was full of good works and
 37 alms-deeds which she did. And in those days she was sick and died;
 38 whom having washed, they laid in an upper chamber. And Lydda

V. 26. *And coming to Jerusalem*—Three years after. Gal. i. 18. These three years St. Paul passes over. ch. xxii. 17. likewise.

V. 27. *To the apostles*—Peter and James, Gal. i. 18. 19. *And declared*—He who has been an enemy to the truth, ought not to be trusted, till he gives proof that he is changed.

V. 31. *Then the church*—The whole body of Christian believers *had peace*—Their bitterest persecutor being converted. *And being built up*—In holy, loving faith continually increasing. *and walking in*—That is, speaking and acting only from this principle, *the fear of God, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost*—An excellent mixture of inward

and outward peace, tempered with filial fear.

V. 35. *Lydda* was a large town, one day's journey from *Jerusalem*. It stood in the plain or valley of *Sharon*, which extended from *Cesarea* to *Joppa*, and was noted for its fruitfulness.

V. 36. *Tabitha, which is by interpretation Dorcas*—She was probably an *Hellenist Jew*, known among the *Hebrews* by the *Syriac* name *Tabitha*, while the *Greeks* called her in their own language, *Dorcas*. They are both words of the same import, and signify a roe or fawn.

V. 38. *The disciples sent to him*—Probably none of those at *Joppa* had the gift of miracles.

being near Joppa, the disciples hearing Peter was there, sent him two
 39 men, desiring that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter
 arose and went with them; whom being come, they brought into the
 upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing
 the coats and garments which Dorcas had made, while she was with them.
 40 But Peter having put them all out, kneeled down and prayed; and
 41 turning to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes,
 and seeing Peter, sat up. And giving her his hand, he lifted her up,
 and having called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.
 42 And it was known through all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.
 43 And he tarried many days in Joppa, with one Simon, a tanner.

X. And there was a certain man in Cesarea, named Cornelius, a centurion
 2 of that called the Italian band, A devout *man*, and fearing God with all
 his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.
 3 He saw plainly in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of
 4 God coming in to him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And looking

miracles. Nor is it certain, that they expected a miracle from him.

V. 39. *While she was with them*—That is, before she died.

V. 40. *Peter having put them all out*—That he might have the better opportunity of wrestling with God in prayer, *Said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, sat up*—Who can imagine the surprize of *Dorcas*, when called back to life? Or of her friends, when they saw her alive? For the sake of themselves, and of the poor, there was cause of rejoicing; and much more, for such a confirmation of the gospel. Yet to herself it was a matter of resignation, not joy, to be called back to these scenes of vanity: But doubtless her remaining days were still more zealously spent in the service of her Saviour and her God. Thus was a richer treasure laid up for her in heaven, and she afterwards returned to a more exceeding weight of glory, than that from which so astonishing a providence had recalled her for a season.

V. 1. *And there was a certain man*—The first fruits of the *Gentiles in Cesarea*—Where *Philip* had been before. (ch. viii. 40.) So that the doctrine of salvation by faith in *Jesus*, was not unknown there. *Cesarea* was the seat of the civil government, as *Jerusalem* was of the ecclesiastical. It is observable, that the gospel made its way first through the metropolitan cities. So it first seized *Jerusalem* and *Cesarea*: afterwards *Philippi*, *Athens*, *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, *Rome* itself. *A centurion*, or captain, of that called the *Italian band*—That is, troop or company.

V. 2. *Who gave much alms to the people*—That is, to the *Jews*, many of whom were at that time extremely poor.

V. 3. *He saw a vision*—Not in a trance, like *Peter*; plainly, so as to leave one not accustomed to things of this kind, no room to suspect any imposition.

V. 4. *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God*—Dare any man say, These were only splendid sins? Or that they were an abomination before God?

stedfastly on him, and being affrighted, he said, What is it, Sir? And he said to him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial
 5 before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call hither Simon, who is
 6 surnamed Peter. He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is
 7 by the sea. And when the angel who spake to him was departed, he
 8 called two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier, of them that
 9 waited on him continually: And having declared all things to them, he
 10 sent them to Joppa. On the morrow, as they journeyed and drew nigh to
 the city, Peter went up on the house-top, to pray about the sixth hour.
 11 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they
 12 made ready, he fell into a trance. And saw heaven opened, and a
 certain vessel like a great sheet, tied at the four corners, descending,
 13 and let down on the earth: Wherein were all four-footed creatures,
 14 and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air. And a voice
 15 came to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, In no wise, Lord:
 16 for I have never eaten any thing common or unclean. And the voice
 17 came to him again, the second time, What God hath purified, call not
 thou common. This was done thrice, and the vessel was taken up again
 17 to heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself, what the vision he had

God? And yet it is certain, in the *Christian* sense, *Cornelius* was then an unbeliever. He had not then faith in *Christ*. So certain it is, that every one who seeks faith in *Christ*, should seek it in prayer, and doing good to all men: Though in strictness, what is not exactly according to the divine rule, must stand in need of divine favour and indulgence.

V. 8 *A devout soldier*—How many such attendants have our modern officers? *A devout soldier* would now be looked upon as little better than a deserter from his colours.

V. 10. *And he became very hungry*—At the usual meal-time. The symbols in visions and trances, it is easy to observe, are generally suited to the state of the natural faculties.

V. 11. *Tied at the corners*—Not all in one knot, but each fastened as it were up to heaven.

V. 14. *But Peter said, In no wise, Lord*—When God commands a strange, or seemingly improper thing, the first objection frequently finds pardon. But it ought not to be repeated. This doubt and delay of St. *Peter*, had several good effects. Hereby the will of God in this important point, was made more evident and incontestable. And *Peter* also, having been so slow of belief himself, could the more easily bear the doubting of his brethren, ch. xi. 2, &c.

V. 15. *What God hath purified*—Hath made and declared clean. Nothing but what is clean can come down from heaven. St. *Peter* well remembered this saying, in the council at *Jerusalem*, ch. xv. 9.

V. 16. *This was done thrice*—To make the deeper impression.

V. 17. *While Peter doubted in himself, behold the men*—Frequently the things which befall us *within* and from *without* at the same time

seen should mean, behold the men sent by Cornelius, having enquired
 18 out Simon's house, stood at the gate, And calling asked, Whether
 19 Simon, surnamed Peter lodged there? While Peter was musing on the
 20 vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise there-
 fore and go down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent
 21 them. Then Peter going down to the men, said, Behold, I am he whom
 22 ye seek: for what cause are ye come? And they said, Cornelius a
 centurion, a just man, and fearing God, and of good report among
 all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by an holy angel, to send
 23 for thee to his house, and to hear words from thee. And he invited
 them in and lodged *them*. And the next day, rising up, he went away
 24 with them; and certain brethren from Joppa went with him. And the
 day following they entered into Cesarea. And Cornelius was waiting
 25 for them, having called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as
 26 Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and falling down at his feet,
 worshipped *him*. But Peter raised him up, saying, Arise: I myself also
 27 am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in and found many
 28 come together. And he said to them, Ye know it is unlawful for a Jew
 to join with or come to one of another nation; but God hath shewed me
 29 to call no man common or unclean. Therefore being sent for, I came
 without gainsaying. I ask therefore, for what intent ye have sent for
 30 me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting till this hour,

time, are a key to each other. The things which thus concur and agree together, ought to be diligently attended to.

V. 19. *Behold three men seek thee, arise therefore and go down, and go with them, doubting nothing*—How gradually was St. Peter prepared, to receive this new admonition of the Spirit! Thus God is wont to lead on his children by degrees, always giving them light for the present hour.

V. 24. *Cornelius was waiting for them*—Not engaging himself in any secular business, during that solemn time, but being altogether intent on this one thing.

V. 26. *I myself am a man*—And not God, who alone ought to be worshipped. *Mat. vi. 10.*

V. 28. *But God hath shewed me*—He speaks sparingly to *them*, of his former doubt, and his late vision.

V. 29. *I ask, for what intent ye have sent for me?*—St. Peter knew this already. But he puts *Cornelius* on telling the story, both that the rest might be informed, and *Cornelius* himself more impressed by the narration: the repetition of which, even as we read it, gives a new dignity and spirit, to *Peter's* succeeding discourse.

V. 30. *Four days ago I was fasting*—The first of these days he had the vision; the second, his messengers came to *Joppa*; on the third, St. Peter set out; and on the fourth, came to *Cesarea*.

and at the ninth hour I was praying in my house, and behold a man
 31 stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is
 32 heard, and thine alms are remembered before God. Send therefore
 to Joppa, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth in
 the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea, who being come, shall speak to
 33 thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee, and thou hast done well in
 coming. Now therefore we are all present before God, to hear all things
 that are commanded thee by God.

34 Then Peter opening *his* mouth, said, I perceive of a truth that God
 35 is not a respecter of persons: But in every nation, he that feareth him,
 36 and worketh righteousness, is accepted by him. *This is* the word
 which he sent to the children of Israel, preaching the glad tidings of
 37 peace through Jesus Christ; He is Lord of all. Ye know the word
 which was published through all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after
 38 the baptism which John preached: How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth

V. 31. *Thy prayer is heard*—Doubtless he had been praying for instruction, how to worship God in the most acceptable manner.

V. 33. *Now therefore we are all present before God*—The language of every truly Christian congregation.

V. 34. *I perceive of a truth*—More clearly than ever, from such a concurrence of circumstances: *That God is not a respecter of persons*—Is not partial in his love. The words mean, in a particular sense, That he does not confine his love to one nation: in a general, that he is loving to every man, and willeth all men should be saved.

V. 35. *But in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness*—He that, first, reverences God, as great, wise, good, the cause, end, and governor of all things, and secondly, from this awful regard to him, not only avoids all known evil, but endeavours, according to the best light he has, to do all things well; *is accepted of him*—Through *Christ*, though he knows him not. The assertion is express, and admits of no exception. He is in the favour of God, whether enjoying his written word and ordinances or not. Nevertheless the addition

of these is an unspeakable blessing, to those who were before in some measure accepted. Otherwise God would never have sent an angel from heaven, to direct *Cornelius* to *St. Peter*.

V. 36. *This is the word which God sent*—When he sent his son into the world, *preaching*—Proclaiming by him—*Peace* between God and man, whether *Jew or Gentile*—By the God-man. *He is Lord of both; yea Lord of and over all.*

V. 37. *Ye know the word which was published*—You know the facts in general, the meaning of which I shall now more particularly explain and confirm to you. *The baptism which John preached*—To which he invited them by his preaching, in token of their repentance. This began in *Galilee*, which was near *Cesarea*.

V. 38. *How God anointed Jesus*—Particularly at his baptism, thereby inaugurating him to his office: *With the Holy Ghost and with power*—It is worthy our remark, that frequently when the Holy Ghost is mentioned, there is added a word particularly adapted to the present circumstance. So the deacons were to be *full of the*

- with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with him.
- 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom yet they slew, having hanged *him*
- 40 on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him
- 41 openly; (Not to all the people, but to witnesses, chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him) after he rose from the dead.
- 42 And he commanded us, to proclaim to the people, and to testify, that it
- 43 is he who is ordained by God the judge of the living and the dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that every one who believeth in him, receiveth forgiveness of sins through his name.
- 44 While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all
- 45 that were hearing the word. And the believers of the circumcision, as many as came with Peter, were amazed, that the gift of the Holy
- 46 Ghost was poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speaking with tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter answered,
- 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have

the Holy Ghost and wisdom, ch. vi. 3. *Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost and faith*, ch. xi. 24. the disciples were *filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost*, ch. xiii. 52. And here, where his mighty works are mentioned, *Christ* himself is said to be *anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power. For God was with him*—He speaks sparingly here of the majesty of *Christ*, as considering the state of his hearers.

V. 41. *Not now to all the people*—As before his death; *to us who did eat and drink with him*—That is, conversed familiarly and continually, with him, in the time of his ministry.

V. 42. *It is he who is ordained by God, the judge of the living and the dead*—Of all men, whether they are alive at his coming, or had died before it. This was declaring to them in the strongest terms, How entirely their happiness depended, on a timely and humble subjection to him, who was to be their final judge.

V. 43. *To him give all the prophets witness*

—Speaking to heathens, he does not quote any in particular; *that every one who believeth in him*—Whether he be *Jew* or *Gentile*; *receiveth remission of sins*—Though he had not before either feared God, or worked righteousness.

V. 44. *The Holy Ghost fell on all that were hearing the word*—Thus were they consecrated to God, as the first-fruits of the *Gentiles*. And thus did God give a clear and satisfactory evidence, that he had accepted them, as well as the *Jews*.

V. 45. *The believers of the circumcision*—The believing *Jews*.

V. 47. *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who here received the Holy Ghost?*—He does not say, They have the baptism of the spirit; therefore they do not need baptism with water. But just the contrary: If they have received the spirit, then baptize them with water.

How easily is the question decided, if we will take the word of God for our rule? Either men have received the Holy Ghost

48 received the Holy Ghost, even as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they prayed him to tarry certain days.

XI. Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard, that the
 2 Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter was
 come up to Jerufalem, they of the circumcision debated with him,
 3 saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with
 4 them. Then Peter beginning, laid *all things* before them in order,
 5 saying, I was praying in the city of Joppa, and *being* in a trance, I saw a
 vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down
 6 from heaven by the four corners, and it came even to me: On which
 looking stedfastly, I observed, and saw four-footed creatures of the earth,
 7 and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying
 8 to me, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. But I said, In no wise, Lord: for nothing
 9 common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. And the voice
 10 from heaven answered me again, What God hath purified, call not thou
 common. This was done thrice, and all were drawn up again into
 11 heaven. And behold immediately three men stood at the house where I
 12 was, sent from Cesarea to me. And the Spirit bad me go with them,
 doubting nothing: these six brethren also went with me, and we entered
 13 into the man's house. And he told us, how he had seen an angel stand-
 ing in his house, and saying to him, Send men to Joppa, and call hither
 14 Simon, surnamed Peter, Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all

or not. If they have not, *repent*, saith God, *and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* If they have, if they are already baptized with the Holy Ghost, then *who can forbid water?*

V. 48. *In the name of the Lord*—Which implies the Father who anointed him, and the Spirit, with which he was anointed to his office. But as these *Gentiles* had before believed in God the father, and could not but now believe in the Holy Ghost, under whose powerful influence they were at this very time, there was the less need of taking notice, that they were baptized into the belief and profession of the sacred Three;

though doubtless the apostle administered the ordinances in that very form which *Christ* himself had prescribed.

V. 4. *Peter laid all things before them*—So he did not take it ill to be questioned, nor desire to be treated as infallible. And he answers the more mildly, because it related to a point, which he had not readily believed himself.

V. 5. *Being in a trance*—Which suspends the use of the outward senses.

V. 14. *Saved*—With the full Christian salvation, in this world, and the world to come.

V. 17. *To*

15 thy family may be saved. And as I began to speak the Holy Ghost fell
 16 on them, even as on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word
 of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye
 17 shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. If then God gave to them the
 same gift as even to us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ,
 18 who was I that could withstand God? When they heard these things,
 they were quiet, and glorified God, saying, Then God hath given to the
 19 Gentiles also repentance unto life. Now they who had been dispersed
 by the distress which arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenicia,
 and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none but Jews only.
 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who coming into
 21 Antioch, spake to the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand
 of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned to
 22 the Lord. And tidings of these things came to the ears of the church
 that was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas, to go as far as

V. 17. *To us, when we believed*—The sense is, because we believed, not because we were circumcised, was the Holy Ghost given to us. *What was I*—A mere instrument in God's hand. They had enquired only concerning his *eating with the Gentiles*. He satisfies them likewise concerning his baptizing them, and shews that he had done right in going to *Cornelius*, not only by the command of God, but also by the event, the descent of the Holy Ghost.

And *who are we, that we should withstand God?* Particularly by laying down rules of Christian communion, which exclude any whom he has admitted into the church of the first-born, from worshipping God together. O that all church-governors would consider, how bold an usurpation this is, on the authority of the supreme Lord of the church! O that the sin of thus *withstanding* God, may not be laid to the charge of those, who perhaps with a good intention, but in an over-fondness for their own forms, have done it, and are continually doing it!

V. 18. *They glorified God*—Being thoroughly

satisfied. *Repentance unto life*—True repentance is a change from spiritual death to spiritual life, and leads to life everlasting.

V. 19. *They who had been dispersed*—St. Luke here resumes the thread of his narration, in the very words wherewith he broke it off, ch. viii. 4. *As far as Phenicia* north, *Cyprus* to the west, and *Antioch* to the east.

V. 20. *Some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene*—Who were more accustomed to converse with the *Gentiles*. *Who coming into Antioch*—Then the capital of *Syria*, and next *Rome* and *Alexandria*, the most considerable city of the empire. *Spake to the Greeks*—As the *Greeks* were the most celebrated of the *Gentile* nations near *Judea*, the *Jews* called all the *Gentiles* by that name. Here we have the first account, of the preaching the gospel to the idolatrous *Gentiles*. All those to whom it had been preached before, did at least worship one God, the God of *Israel*.

V. 21. *And the hand of the Lord*—That is, the power of his Spirit.

V. 26. *And*

- 23 Antioch: Who coming and seeing the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted *them* all, to cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart.
- 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith. And
- 25 a considerable multitude was added to the Lord. Then went he to Tarsus to seek Saul, and having found him, he brought him to Antioch.
- 26 And a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught a considerable multitude; and the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.
- 27 In those days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. And
- 28 one of them, named Agabus rising up, signified by the Spirit, that there would be a great famine through all the world; which also
- 29 came to pass under Claudius Cæsar. Then the disciples determined to send relief, every one according to his ability, to the brethren who dwelt
- 30 in Judea: Which also they did, sending *it* to the elders, by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

XII. About that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to afflict
 2 certain of the church. And he slew James the brother of John, with the
 3 sword. And perceiving it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter
 4 also: (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) Whom having appre-

V. 26. *And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch*—Here it was that they first received this standing appellation. They were before termed *Nazarenes* and *Galileans*.

V. 28. *Agabus rising up*—In the congregation. *All the world*—The word generally signifies all the *Roman* empire. And so it is doubtless to be taken here.

V. 29. *Then*—Understanding the distress they would otherwise be in, on that account. *The disciples determined to send relief to the brethren in Judea*—Who herein received a manifest proof, of the reality of their conversion.

V. 30. *Sending it to the elders*—Who gave it to the deacons, to be distributed by them, as every one had need.

V. 1. *At that time*—So wisely did God mix rest and persecution in due time and measure succeeding each other. *Herod*—

Agrippa; the latter was his *Roman*, the former his *Syrian* name. He was the grandson of *Herod the Great*, nephew to *Herod Antipas*, who beheaded *John the Baptist*, brother to *Herodias*, and father to that *Agrippa* before whom *St. Paul* afterward made his defence. *Caligula* made him king of the tetrarchy of his uncle *Philip*, to which he afterward added the territories of *Antipas*. *Claudius* made him also king of *Judea*, and added thereto the dominions of *Lysanias*.

V. 2. *James, the brother of John*—So one of the brothers went to God the first, the other, the last of the apostles.

V. 3. *Then were the days of unleavened bread*—At which the *Jews* came together from all parts.

V. 4. *Four quaternions*—Sixteen men, who watched by turns, day and night.

V. 5. *Continual*

hended, he put him in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him forth to the people after the 5 passover. So Peter was kept in the prison; but continual prayer was made to God by the church for him..

6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and the guards 7 before the door were keeping the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood over him, and light shined in the house: and smiting Peter 8 on the side waked him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said to him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals; and he did so. And he said to him, Throw thy garment 9 about thee, and follow me. And going out, he followed him. And he knew not that it was real which was done by the angel, but thought he 10 saw a vision. When they passed through the first and second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city, which opened to them of its own accord: and going out, they went on through one street; and 11 immediately the angel departed from him. And Peter coming to himself said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation 12 of the people of the Jews. And having considered, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John surnamed Mark, where many were gathered 13 together praying. And as he knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel 14 came to hearken, named Rhoda. And knowing Peter's voice, she opened.

V. 5. *Continual prayer was made for him*—Yet when their prayer was answered, they could scarce believe it! (ver. 15.) But why had they not prayed for St. James also? Because he was put to death as soon as apprehended.

V. 6. *Peter was sleeping*—Easy and void of fear: *Between two soldiers*—Sufficiently secured to human appearance.

V. 7. *His chains*—With which his right-arm was bound to one of the soldiers, and his left-arm to the other.

V. 8. *Gird thyself*—Probably he had put off his girdle, sandals, and upper garment, before he lay down to sleep.

V. 10. *The first and second ward*—At each of which doubtless was a guard of

soldiers. *The gate opened of its own accord*—Without either Peter or the angel touching it. *And they went on through one street*—That Peter might know which way to go. *And the angel departed from him*—Being himself sufficient for what remained to be done.

V. 11. *Now I know of a truth*—That this is not a vision, ver. 9.

V. 12. *And having considered*—What was best to be done. *Many were gathered together*—At midnight.

V. 13. *The gate*—At some distance from the house; *to hearken*—If any knocked.

V. 14. *And knowing Peter's voice*—Bidding her open the door.

V. 15. *They*

not the gate for joy, but running in, told *them*, that Peter stood before
 15 the gate. And they said to her, Thou art mad. But she constantly
 16 affirmed, it was so. Then they said, It is his angel. But Peter continued
 knocking. And opening *the door*, they saw him, and were astonished.
 17 But he beckoning to them with his hand, to be silent, declared to them,
 How the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said shew
 these things to James, and to the brethren. And going out he went to
 18 another place. Now when it was day, there was no small stir among
 19 the soldiers, What was become of Peter? And Herod having sought for
 him, and not found *him*, examined the keepers, and commanded *them*
 20 to be put to death. And going down from Judea to Cesarea, he abode
there. And he was highly incensed against them of Tyre and Sidon;
 but they came with one accord to him, and having gained Blastus, the
 king's chamberlain, sued for peace; because their country was nourished
 by the king's *country*.

21 And on a set day, Herod arrayed in royal apparel, and sitting on his
 22 throne, made an oration to them. And the people shouted, *It is the voice*

V. 15. *They said, Thou art mad*—As we say, Sure you are not in your senses to talk so. *It is his angel*—It was a common opinion among the *Jews*, that every man had his particular guardian angel who frequently assumed both his shape and voice. But this is a point on which the scriptures are silent.

V. 17. *Beckoning to them*—Many of whom being amazed, were talking together. *And he said, Shew these things to James*—The brother or kinsman of our Lord, and author of the epistle which bears his name. He appears to have been a person of considerable weight and importance, probably the chief overseer of that province, and of the church in *Jerusalem* in particular. *He went into another place*—Where he might be better concealed, till the storm was over.

V. 19. *Herod commanded them to be put to death*—And thus the wicked suffered, in the room of the righteous. *And going down*

from Judea—With shame, for not having brought forth *Peter*, according to his promise.

V. 20. *Having gained Blastus*—To their side, *they sued for* and obtained *peace*—Reconciliation with *Herod*. And so the Christians of those parts, were by the providence of God, delivered from scarcity. *Their country was nourished*—Was provided with corn; *by the king's country*—Thus *Hiram* also king of *Tyre*, desired of *Solomon*, food or corn for his household, 1 Kings v. 9.

V. 21. *And on a set day*—Which was solemnized yearly, in honour of *Claudius Cæsar*. *Herod arrayed in royal apparel*—In a garment so wrought with silver, that the rays of the rising sun, striking upon, and being reflected from it, dazzled the eyes of the beholders. *The people shouted, It is the voice of a god*—Such profane flattery they frequently paid to princes. But the commonness of a wicked custom, rather increases than lessens the guilt of it.

V. 23. *And*

23 of a God, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not glory to God; and being eaten by
24 worms, he expired. But the word of God grew and multiplied.

25 And Barnabas and Saul, having fulfilled their service, returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, surnamed Mark.

XIII. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Simeon called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch,
2 and Saul. And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which
3 I have called them. Then having fasted and prayed, and laid their
4 hands on them, they sent *them* away. So being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, they went down to Seleucia, and from thence sailed to Cyprus.
5 And being at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues
6 of the Jews; and they had also John for *their* attendant. And having gone through the whole isle as far as Paphos, they found a certain
7 magician, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus, Who was

V. 23. *And immediately*—God does not delay to vindicate his injured honour: *An angel of the Lord smote him*—Of this, other historians say nothing: so wide a difference there is, between divine and human history! An angel of the Lord brought out *Peter*: An angel smote *Herod*. Men did not see the instruments in either case. These were only known to the people of God. *Because he gave not glory to God*—He willingly received it to himself, and by this sacrilege filled up the measure of his iniquities. So then vengeance tarried not. *And he was eaten by worms, or vermin*—How changed! *And on the fifth day expired* in exquisite torture. Such was the event! The persecutor perished, and the gospel grew and multiplied.

V. 25. *Saul returned*—To Antioch; taking John surnamed Mark—The son of Mary, (at whose house the disciples met, to pray for Peter) who was sister to Barnabas.

V. 18 *Manaen, who had been brought up*

with Herod—His foster brother, now freed from the temptations of a court.

V. 2. *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them*—This was not ordaining them. St. Paul was ordained long before, and that *not of men, neither by man*: it was only inducing him to the province for which our Lord had appointed him from the beginning, and which was now revealed to the prophets and teachers. In consequence of this they fasted, prayed, and laid their hands upon them; a rite which was used not in ordination only, but in blessing, and on many other occasions.

V. 3. *Then having fasted*—Again. Thus they did also, ch. xiv. 23.

V. 5. *In the synagogues*—Using all opportunities that offered.

V. 6. *Paphos* was on the western, *Salamis* on the eastern parts of this island.

V. 7. *The proconsul*—The Roman governor of Cyprus, a prudent man—And therefore not overswayed

with the Proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man. He calling to him
 8 Barnabas and Saul, desired to hear the word of God, but Elymas the
 Magician (so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to
 9 turn away the Proconsul from the faith. Then Saul (who is also called
 10 Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, fixing his eyes upon him, said, O full
 of all guile and mischief, thou Son of the devil, thou enemy of all right-
 teousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?
 11 And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee; and thou shalt be
 blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately a mist and dark-
 12 ness fell upon him, and going about, he sought some to lead him. Then
 the Proconsul, seeing what was done, believed, being astonished at the
 doctrine of the Lord.

13 And Paul and those with him loosing from Paphos, came to Perga
 in Pamphylia; but John withdrawing from them, returned to Jerusalem.
 14 And departing from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia; and going
 15 into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, they sat down. And after the
 reading of the law and the prophets, the chief of the synagogue sent to
 them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation to the

overswayed by *Elymas*, but desirous to enquire farther.

V. 9. *Then Saul, who is also called Paul*—It is not improbable, that coming now among the Romans, they would naturally adapt his name to their own language, and so called him *Paul* instead of *Saul*. Perhaps the family of the proconsul might be the first, who addressed to or spoke of him by this name. And from this time, being the apostle of the *Gentiles*, he himself used the name which was more familiar to them.

V. 10. *O full of all guile*—As a false prophet, and *all mischief*—As a magician. *Thou son of the devil*—A title well suited to a magician; and one who not only was himself unrighteous, but laboured to keep others from all goodness. *Wilt thou not cease to pervert the ways of the Lord?*—Even now thou hast heard the truth of the gospel.

V. 11. *And immediately a mist*—Or dim-

ness within, and darkness without, fell upon him.

V. 12. *Being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord*—Confirmed by such a miracle.

V. 13. *John withdrawing from them returned*—Tired with fatigue, or shrinking from danger.

V. 14. *Antioch in Pisidia*—Different from the *Antioch* mentioned ver. 1.

V. 15. *And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the chief of the synagogue sent to them*—The law was read over once every year, a portion of it every sabbath; to which was added a lesson taken out of the prophets. After this was over, any one might speak to the people, on any subject he thought convenient. Yet it was a circumstance of decency which *Paul* and *Barnabas* would hardly omit, to acquaint their rulers with their desire of doing it: probably by some message before the service began.

V. 16. *Ye*

16 people, speak. Then Paul standing, and waving his hand, said, Ye men
 17 of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken. * The God of this people
 chose our fathers, and raised the people, while sojourning in the land of
 18 Egypt, and brought them out of it with an uplifted arm. † And he
 suffered their manners in the wilderness about the space of forty years.
 19 And having destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided
 20 their land to them by lot, about four hundred and fifty years. And
 21 after that, he gave *them* judges, until Samuel the prophet. And after-
 ward they desired a king: and God gave them Saul the son of Kish,
 22 a man of the tribe of Benjamin, forty years. And having removed him,
 ‡ he raised up to them David for their king, to whom also bearing wit-
 ness, he said, I have found David, the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine
 own heart, who will do all my will.

23 Of this man's seed hath God, according to *his* promise, raised unto
 24 Israel a Saviour, Jesus; John having first preached before his coming,

V. 16. *Ye that fear God*—Whether profes-
 lytes or heathens.

V. 17. *The God*—By such a commemo-
 ration of God's favours to their fathers, at
 once their minds were conciliated to the
 speaker, they were convinced of their duty
 to God, and invited to believe his promise,
 and the accomplishment of it. The six
 verses, 17—22, contain the whole sum of
 the Old Testament. *Of this People*—Paul
 here chiefly addresses himself to those
 whom he styles, *Ye that fear God*: he speaks
 of *Israel* first; and ver. 26. speaks more
 directly to the *Israelites* themselves. *Chose*
 —And this exalted the people; not any
 merit or goodness of their own, *Ezek.* xv. 5.
Our fathers—*Abraham* and his posterity.

V. 19. *Seven nations*—Enumerated *Deut.*
 vii. 1. *about four hundred and fifty years*—
 That is, from the choice of the fathers to
 the dividing of the land; it was about four
 hundred and fifty years.

V. 21. *He gave them Saul forty years*—
 Including the time wherein *Samuel* judged
Israel.

V. 22. *Having removed him*—Hence they

might understand, that the dispensations
 of God admit of various changes. *I have
 found David a man after mine own heart*—
 This expression is to be taken in a limited
 sense. *David* was such at *that time*, but not
 at all times. And he was so, *in that respect*,
 as he performed *all God's will*, in the par-
 ticulars there mentioned. But he was not a
man after God's own heart in other respects,
 wherein he performed his own will. In
 the matter of *Uriah*, for instance, he was
 as far from being a *man after God's heart*
 as *Saul* himself was. It is therefore a very
 gross, as well as dangerous mistake, to
 suppose this is the character of *David* in
 every part of his behaviour. We must
 beware of this, unless we would recommend
 adultery and murder as *things after God's
 own heart*.

V. 24. *John having first preached*—He
 mentions this as a thing already known to
 them. And so doubtless it was. For it
 gave so loud an alarm to the whole *Jewish*
 nation, as could not be heard in foreign
 countries; at least as remote as *Pisidia*.

4 D 2

V. 25. *His*

* *Isaiah* i. 2. † *Deut.* i. 31. ‡ 1 *Sam.* xvi. 12, 13.

the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. * And as John
25 was fulfilling his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not
he. But behold one cometh after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not
worthy to loose.

26 Men, brethren, children of the flock of Abraham, and those among
27 you who fear God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they
that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, neither knowing him, nor the
sayings of the prophets, which are read every sabbath-day, have fulfilled
28 *them*, in condemning *him*. And though they found no cause of death
29 *in him*, yet desired they Pilate, that he might be put to death. And
when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, taking *him*
30 down from the tree, they laid *him* in a sepulchre. But God raised him
31 from the dead. And he was seen many days by them who came up with
him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnessess to the people.

32 And we declare to you glad tidings, that the promise which was
33 made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled this to us their children, in raising
up Jesus: as it was written also in the second Psalm, † Thou art my
34 Son, this day have I begotten thee. And because he raised him up from
the dead, no more to return to corruption, he spake thus, ‡ I will give

V. 25. *His course*—His work was quickly finished, and might there well be termed a *course* or *race*.

V. 27. *For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers*—He here anticipates a strong objection, “Why did not they at Jerusalem, and especially their rulers, believe?” They *knew not him*, because they understood not those very prophets whom they read or heard continually. Their very condemning him, innocent as he was, proves that they understood not the prophecies concerning him.

V. 29. *They fulfilled all things that were written of him*—So far could they go, but no farther.

V. 31. *He was seen many days, by them who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem*—This last journey both presupposes all the rest, and was the most important of all.

V. 33. *Thou art my son: this day have I begotten thee*—It is true, he was the Son of God from eternity. The meaning therefore is, I have this day declared thee to be my son. As St. Paul elsewhere, *Declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.* (Rom. i. 4.) And it is with peculiar propriety and beauty, that God is said to *have begotten him*, on the day when he raised him from the dead, as he seemed then to be born out of the earth anew.

V. 34. *No more to return to corruption*—That is, to die no more. *I will give you the sure mercies of David*—The blessings promised to David in Christ. These are sure, certain, firm, solid, to every true believer in him. And hence the resurrection of Christ, necessarily follows: for without this, those blessings could not be given.

V. 35. *He*

* Luke iii. 16. † Psalm ii. 7. ‡ Isaiah lv. 3.

35 you the sure mercies of David, Wherefore he saith also in another
 36 Psalm, || Thou wilt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption. Now
 David having served the will of God in his generation, fell asleep, and
 37 was added to his fathers, and saw corruption. But he whom God raised
 38 did not see corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men *and*
 brethren, that through this man is preached to you the forgiveness of
 39 sins. And by him every one that believeth is justified from all things,
 40 from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware there-
 41 fore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken in the prophets, * Behold,
 ye despisers, and wonder and perish, For I work a work in your days,
 a work which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto
 you.
 42 And when the Jews were going out of the synagogue, the Gentiles
 besought *them*, that these words might be spoken on the sabbath
 43 between. And when the congregation was broken up, many of the

V. 35. *He saith—David in the name of the Messiah.*

V. 36. *David, having served the will of God in his generation, fell asleep—*So his service extended not itself beyond the bounds of the common age of man: but the service of the *Messiah* to all generations, as his kingdom to all ages. *Served the will of God—*Why art thou here, thou who art yet in the world? Is it not, that thou also mayest *serve the will of God*? Art thou serving it now? Doing *all his will*? *And was added to his fathers—*Not only in body. This expression refers to the soul also, and supposes the immortality of it.

V. 39. *Every one that believeth is justified from all things—*Has the actual forgiveness of all his sins, at the very time of his believing; *From which ye could not be justified—*Not only ye cannot now; but ye never could. For it afforded no expiation for presumptuous sins. *By the law of Moses—*The whole *Mosaic* institution. The division of the law into moral and ceremonial, was not so common among the *Jews*, as it is among us. Nor does the apostle here con-

sider it at all: but *Moses* and *Christ* are opposed to each other.

V. 40. *Beware—*A weighty and seasonable admonition. No reproof is as yet added to it.

V. 41. *I work a work which ye will in no wise believe—*This was originally spoken to those, who would not believe that God would ever deliver them from the power of the *Chaldeans*. But it is applicable to any who will not believe the promises or the works of God.

V. 42. *When the Jews were going out—*Probably many of them, not bearing to hear him, went out before he had done. *The sabbath between—*So the *Jews* call to this day the sabbath between the first day of the month *Tisri* (on which the civil year begins) and the tenth of the same month, which is the solemn day of expiation.

V. 43. *Who speaking to them—*More familiarly, *persuaded them to continue—*For trials were at hand, *in the grace of God—*That is, to adhere to the gospel or Christian faith.

V. 46. *Then*

|| Psalm xvi. 10. * Habak. i. 5.

Jews and religious profelytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together
45 to hear the word of God. But the Jews seeing the multitudes, were
filled with zeal, and spake against the things spoken by Paul, con-
46 tradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas speaking boldly,
said, It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you
first; but seeing you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy
47 of eternal life, behold! we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord
commanded us, *saying*, * I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
48 that thou mightest be for salvation to the ends of the earth. And the
Gentiles hearing *it* were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and
49 as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of
50 the Lord was published through all that country. But the Jews stirred
up the devout, honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and
raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of

V. 46. *Then Paul and Barnabas speaking boldly, said*—Those who hinder others must be publicly reprov'd. *It was necessary*—Though ye are not worthy: he shews that he had not preached to *them*, from any confidence of their believing. *But seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life*—They indeed judg'd none but themselves worthy of it. Yet their rejecting of the gospel was the same as saying, "We are unworthy of eternal life." *Behold!*—A thing now present! An astonishing revolution! *We turn to the Gentiles*—Not that they left off preaching to the *Jews* in other places. But they now determin'd to lose time no more at *Antioch* on their ungrateful countrymen, but to employ themselves wholly in doing what they could, for the conversion of the *Gentiles* there.

V. 47. *For so hath the Lord commanded us*—By sending us forth, and giving us an opportunity of fulfilling what he had foretold. *I have set thee*—The Father speaks to *Christ*.

V. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life*—St. *Luke* does not say *fore-ordained*. He is not speaking of what was done from eternity, but of what was then done, thro' the preaching of the gospel. He is describing that *ordination*, and that only, which was at the very time of hearing it. During this sermon those *believed*, says the apostle, to whom God then gave power to believe. It is as if he had said, "They believed, whose *hearts the Lord opened*;" as he expresses it in a clearly parallel place, speaking of the same kind of *ordination*, (*Acts* xvi. 14, &c.) It is observable, the original word is not once used in scripture to express eternal predestination of any kind. The sum is, all those, and those only, who were now *ordained*, now *believed*. Not that God rejected the rest: it was his will, that they also should have been saved: but they thrust salvation from them. Nor were they who then believed, constrained to believe. But grace was then first copiously offered them. And they did not thrust

* *Isaiah* xlix. 6.

51 their coats. And they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and
52 went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the
Holy Ghost.

XIV. And in Iconium they went together into the synagogue of the Jews,
and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and Greeks
2 believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made
3 their minds evil-affected against the brethren. Yet they abode a long
time speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness to the word of his
5 grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.
4 But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews,
and part with the apostles. And when there was an assault both of
the Gentiles and Jews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and
6 to stone them, Being aware of *it*, they fled to Lystra and Derbe,
7 cities of Lycaonia and the country round about, And preached the
gospel there.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, having
9 been a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This
man heard Paul speaking; who fixing his eyes upon him, and per-
10 ceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand
11 upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. But the multitude,
seeing what Paul had done, lifted up their voices, saying, in the Lycaonian
language, The gods are come down to us, in the likeness of men.
12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, because he
13 was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before

thrust it away, so that a great multitude even of *Gentiles* were converted. In a word the expression properly implies, a present operation of divine grace, working faith in the hearers.

V. 1. *They so spake*—Persecution having increased their strength.

V. 9. *He had faith to be healed*—He felt the power of God in his soul; and thence knew it was sufficient to heal his body also.

V. 11. *The gods are come down*—Which the heathens supposed they frequently did;

Jupiter especially. But how amazingly does the prince of darkness blind the minds of them that believe not? The *Jews* would not own *Christ's* godhead, though they saw him work numberless miracles. On the other hand, the heathens seeing mere man work one miracle, were for deifying them immediately.

V. 13. *The priest of Jupiter*—Whose temple and image were just without the gate of the city, brought garlands—To put on the victims, and bulls—The usual offerings to *Jupiter*.

V. 14. *They*

their city, brought bulls and garlands to the gates, and with the mul-
 14 titude would have sacrificed. But when the apostles, Barnabas and
 Paul heard *it*, they rent their clothes, and sprang in among the people,
 15 crying out, and saying, Men, why do ye these things? We also are men
 of like passions with you, and preach to you, to turn from these vanities
 unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and
 16 all things that are therein: Who, in times past, suffered all nations to
 17 walk in their own ways: Yet he left not himself without witness, in that
 he did good, giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your
 18 hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained
 they the multitude from sacrificing to them.

19 But there came thither Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who per-
 suaded the multitude, and having stoned Paul, dragged *him* out of
 20 the city, supposing he had been dead. But as the disciples stood round
 about him, he rose and went into the city: and the next day he departed
 21 with Barnabas to Derbe. And having preached the gospel to that city,
 and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and Iconium, and

V. 14. *They sprang in among the people, crying out*—As in a fire, or other sudden and great danger.

V. 15. *To turn from these vanities*—From worshipping any but the true God. He does not deign to call them gods: *unto the living God*—Not like these dead idols: *who made the heaven and the earth, the sea*—Each of which they supposed to have its own gods.

V. 16. *Who in times past*—He prevents their objecting, “But if these things are so, we should have heard them from our fathers.” *Suffered*—An awful judgment, *all nations*—The multitude of them that err, does not turn error into truth, *to walk in their own ways*—The idolatries which they had chosen.

V. 17. *He left not himself without witness*—For the heathens had always from God himself a testimony both of his existence and of his providence; *in that he did good*—Even by punishments he testifies of himself; but more, peculiarly by benefits; *giving*

rain—By which air, earth, and sea, are as it were all joined together, *from heaven*—The seat of God; to which St. Paul probably pointed while he spoke, *filling the body with food*, the soul *with gladness*.

V. 19. *Who persuaded the multitude*—Moved with equal ease either to adore or murder him.

V. 20. *But as the disciples stood round*—Probably after sun-set. The enraged multitude would scarce have suffered it in the day-time: *He rose and went into the city*—That he should be able to do this, just after he had been left for dead, was a miracle little less than a resurrection from the dead. Especially considering the manner wherein the *Jewish* malefactors were stoned. The witnesses first threw as large a stone as they could lift, with all possible violence upon his head, which alone was sufficient to dash the skull in pieces. All the people then joined, as long as any motion or token of life remained.

V. 23. *When*

22 Antioch : Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to
 continue in the faith ; and that we must through many tribulations
 23 enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them
 presbyters in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended
 24 them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. And having passed
 25 through Pisidia they came to Pamphylia, and having spoken the word in
 26 Perga, they went down to Attalia. And thence sailed back to Antioch,
 from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the
 27 work which they had fulfilled. And being come and having gathered
 the church together, they related all that God had done with them, and
 28 that he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they abode
 there a long time with the disciples.

XV. But certain men coming down from Judea taught the brethren,
 Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot
 2 be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had had no small
 contention and debate with them, they determined, that Paul and
 Barnabas and certain others of them, should go up to the apostles

V. 23. *When they had ordained them presbyters in every church*---Out of those who were themselves but newly converted. So soon can God enable even a babe in *Christ* to build up others in the common faith : *They commended them to the Lord*---An expression implying faith in *Christ*, as well as love to the brethren.

V. 25. *Perga and Attalia* were cities of *Pamphylia*.

V. 26. *Recommended to the grace*---Or favour of God. *for the work which they had fulfilled*---This shews the nature and design of that laying on of hands, which was mentioned, ch. xiii. 3.

V. 1. *Coming down from Judea*--Perhaps to supply what they thought *Paul* and *Barnabas* had omitted.

V. 2. *They (the brethren) determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others, should go up to Jerusalem about this question*---

This is the journey, to which *St. Paul* refers, (*Gal. ii. 1, 2.*) when he says, he *went up by revelation* : which is very consistent with this ; for the church in sending them might be directed by a revelation, made either immediately to *St. Paul*, or some other person, relating to so important an affair. Important indeed it was, that these *Jewish* impositions should be solemnly opposed in time ; because multitudes of converts were still *zealous for the law*, and ready to contend for the observance of it. Indeed many of the Christians of *Antioch* would have acquiesced in the determination of *Paul* alone. But as many others might have prejudices against him, for his having been so much concerned for the *Gentiles*, it was highly expedient to take the concurrent judgment of all the apostles on this occasion.

3 and elders at Jerusalem about this question. And being brought
 on their way by the church, they passed through Phenicia and
 Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused
 4 great joy to all the brethren. And being come to Jerusalem, they were
 received by the church, and the apostles and elders; and they declared
 5 all things which God had done with them. But there rose up, *said they*,
 certain of the sect of the pharisees, who believed, saying, That we ought
 to circumcise them, and command them to keep the law of Moses.
 6 And the apostles and elders came together, to consider of this matter.
 7 And after much debate Peter rose up and said to them, Brethren,
 ye know that God long ago made choice among us, that the Gentiles
 8 should by my mouth hear the word of the gospel and believe. And
 God who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving the Holy Ghost
 9 to them also, even as to us; And put no difference between us and
 10 them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye
 God to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither our
 11 fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe, that through the
 grace of the Lord Jesus, we shall be saved even as they.
 12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and hearkened to Barnabas and
 Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought by them

V. 4. *They were received*---That is solemnly welcomed.

V. 5. *But certain Pharisees*---For even believers are apt to retain their former turn of mind, and prejudices derived therefrom. *The law of Moses*---The whole law, both moral and ritual.

V. 7. *After much debate*---It does not appear, that this was among the apostles themselves. But if it had, if they themselves had debated at first, yet might their final decision be from an unerring direction. For how really soever they were inspired, we need not suppose their inspiration was always so instantaneous and express, as to supersede any deliberation in their own minds, or any consultation with each other. *Peter rose up*---This is the last time he is mentioned in the *Acts*.

V. 8. *God bare them witness*---That he had

accepted them, by giving them the Holy Ghost.

V. 9. *Purifying*---This word is repeated, from ch. x. 15. *their hearts*---The heart is the proper seat of purity; *by faith*---Without concerning themselves with the *Mosaic* law.

V. 10. *Now therefore*---Seeing these things are so: *Why tempt ye God?*---Why do ye provoke him to anger, by putting so heavy a yoke on their neck?

V. 11. *The Lord Jesus*---He does not here say *Our Lord*: because in this solemn place he means, the Lord of all. *We*---Jews, *shall be saved even as they*---Gentiles, namely, *through the grace of the Lord Jesus*, not by our observance of the ceremonial law.

V. 12. *Miracles and wonders*---By which also what St. Peter had said was confirmed.

V. 14. *Simon*

13 among the Gentiles. And when they held their peace, James answered,
 14 saying, Brethren, hearken to me. Simon hath declared, how God at
 first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.
 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, * After
 16 this I will return and build again the fallen tabernacle of David;
 17 I will build again the ruins thereof, and will set it up, That the residue
 of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles on whom my name is
 18 called, faith the Lord, who doth these things. Known unto God are all
 19 his works from eternity. Wherefore I judge, That we trouble not them
 20 who from among the Gentiles turn to God. But that we write to them,

V. 14. *Simon hath declared*---James the apostle of the *Hebrews*, calls *Peter* by his *Hebrew* name. *To take out of them a people for his name*---That is, to believe in him, to be called by his name.

V. 15. *To this agree*---St. *Peter* had urged the plain fact, which St. *James* confirms by scripture prophecy, *the words of the prophets*---One of whom is immediately cited.

V. 16. *After this*---After the *Jewish* dispensation expires. *I will build again the fallen tabernacle of David*---By raising from his seed the *Christ*, who shall build on the ruins of his fallen tabernacle a spiritual and eternal kingdom.

V. 17. *The Gentiles on whom my name is called*---That is, who are called by my name; who are my people.

V. 18. *Known unto God are all his works from eternity*---Which the apostle infers from the prophecy itself, and the accomplishment of it. And this conversion of the *Gentiles* being known to him from eternity, we ought not to think a new or strange thing.

It is observable, he does not speak of God's works in the natural world (which had been nothing to his present purpose) but of his dealing with the children of men. Now he could not know these, without knowing the characters and actions of par-

ticular persons, on a correspondence with which the wisdom and goodness of his providential dispensations is founded. For instance, he could not know, how he would deal with heathen idolaters (whom he was now calling into his church) without knowing there would be heathen idolaters: and yet this was a thing purely contingent, a thing as dependent on the freedom of the human mind, as any we can imagine. This text therefore, among a thousand more, is an unanswerable proof, that God foreknows future contingencies, though there are difficulties relating hereto which men cannot solve.

V. 20. *To abstain from fornication*---Which even the philosophers among the heathens did not account any fault. It was particularly frequent in the worship of their idols; on which account they are here named together: *And from things strangled*---That is, from whatever had been killed, without pouring out the blood. When God first permitted man to eat flesh, he commanded *Noah*, and in him all his posterity, whenever they killed any creature for food, to abstain from the blood thereof. It was to be poured upon the ground as water: doubtless in honour of that blood which was in due time poured out for the sin of the world.

4 E 2

V. 21. Perhaps

* Amos ix. 11.

to abstain from things offered to idols, and fornication, and things
 21 strangled and blood. For Moses hath of old time them that preach him
 in every city, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.
 22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and elders with the whole church,
 to send chosen men from among them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas,
 Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren,
 23 Writing thus by their hand, The apostles, and elders, and the brethren
 salute the brethren who are of the Gentiles, in Antioch, and Syria, and
 24 Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have heard, that some who came from us have
 troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, saying, *Ye must be*
 25 *circumcised, and keep the law, whom we commanded not; It seemed*
 good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send to you chosen men,
 26 with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their
 27 lives, for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore
 28 Judas and Silas, who will also tell *you* the same things by mouth. For
 it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, that no further burden be
 29 laid upon you than these necessary things, To abstain from meats offered

V. 21. Perhaps the connexion is, to the Jews we need write nothing on these heads. For they hear the law continually.

V. 22. *With the whole church*—Which therefore had a part therein; *to send chosen men*—Who might put it beyond all dispute, that this was the judgment of the apostles and all the brethren.

V. 23. *Writing thus and sending it by their hand*—The whole conduct of this affair plainly shews, that the church in those days, had no conception of St. Peter's primacy, or of his being the chief judge in controversies. For the decree is drawn up, not according to his, but the apostle James's proposal and direction: and that in the name, not of St. Peter, but of all the apostles and elders, and of the whole church. Nay, St. Peter's name is not mentioned at all, either in the order for sending to Jerusalem on the question, (ver. 2.) or in the address of the messengers concerning it, (ver. 4.) or in the letter which was written in answer.

V. 24. *Forasmuch as, &c.* The simplicity, weightiness, and conciseness of this letter, are highly observable.

V. 26. *Men that have hazarded their lives*—This is spoken of Paul and Barnabas.

V. 27. *Who will tell you the same things*—Which we have written.

V. 28. *These necessary things*—All of these were necessary for that time. But the first of them was not necessary long: and the direction concerning it was therefore repealed by the same Spirit, as we read in the former epistle to the Corinthians.

V. 29. *Blood*—The eating which was never permitted the children of God, from the beginning of the world. Nothing can be clearer than this. For 1. From Adam to Noah no man ate flesh at all; consequently no man then ate blood. 2. When God allowed Noah and his posterity to eat flesh, he absolutely forbade them to eat blood; and accordingly this, with the other six precepts of Noah, was delivered down from Noah to Moses. 3. God renewed this prohibition

to idols and blood, and things strangled and fornication: from which keeping yourselves, ye will do well. Fare ye well.

30 So being dismissed they came to Antioch, and having assembled the
31 multitude, they delivered the epistle: *Which* having read, they rejoiced
32 for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets,
33 exhorted and confirmed the brethren with many words. And after they
34 had tarried a space, they were dismissed with peace by the brethren to the
35 apostles. But it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Paul also and
Barnabas abode in Antioch, teaching and preaching with many others
also the word of the Lord.

36 And after certain days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go again and
visit the brethren in every city, where we have preached the word
37 of the Lord, *and see* how they do. And Barnabas counselled to take
38 with them John, surnamed Mark. But Paul thought it not right to take
with them him, who had departed from them from Pamphylia, and went

hibition by *Moses*, which was not repealed from the time of *Moses*, till *Christ* came. 4. Neither after his coming did any presume to repeal this decree of the Holy Ghost, till it seemed good to the Bishop of Rome to do, about the middle of the eighth century. 5. From that time those churches which acknowledged his authority, held the eating of blood to be an indifferent thing. But, 6. in all those churches which never did acknowledge the Bishop of Rome's authority, it never was allowed to eat blood; nor is it allowed at this day. This is the plain fact; let men *reason* as plausibly as they please, on one side or the other. *From which keeping yourselves, ye will do well*—That is, ye will find a blessing. This gentle manner of concluding, was worthy the apostolical wisdom and goodness. But how soon did succeeding councils of inferior authority, change it into the stile of Anathemas! Forms which have proved an occasion of consecrating some of the most devilish passions under the most sacred names: and like some ill-adjusted weapons

of war, are most likely to hurt the hand from which they are thrown.

V. 35. *Paul and Barnabas abode in Antioch*—And it was during that time, that *Peter* came down from *Jerusalem*, and that *St. Paul* withstood him to the face, for separating himself from the *Gentiles*, Gal. ii. 11, &c.

V. 36. *Let us go and visit the brethren in every city where we have preached*—This was all that *St. Paul* designed at first. But it was not all that God designed by his journey, whose providence carried him much farther than he intended: *And see how they do*—How their souls prosper; how they grow in faith, hope, love: what else ought to be the grand and constant enquiry, in every ecclesiastical visitation? Reader, how dost thou do?

V. 37. *Barnabas counselled to take John*—His kinsman.

V. 38. *But Paul thought it not right*—To trust him again, who had deserted them before: who had shrunk from the labour and danger of converting those; they were now going to confirm.

V. 39. *And*.

39 not with them to the work. And there was a sharp contention, so that
 they parted from each other: and Barnabas taking Mark with him,
 40 sailed away to Cyprus; But Paul having chose Silas, departed, being
 41 recommended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went
 through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

XVI. And he came down to Derbe and Lystra. And behold a certain disciple
 was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain Jewess that believed;
 2 but his father *was* a Greek: Who was well reported of by the brethren
 3 in Lystra and Iconium. Him Paul would have to go forth with him;
 and he took and circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in
 those places; for they all knew his father, that he was a Greek.
 4 And as they went through the cities, they gave them the decrees, which
 were made by the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem to keep.
 5 And the churches were established in the faith, and increased in number
 daily.
 6 And having gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, being
 7 forbid by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, Coming to

V. 39. *And there was a sharp contention*—Literally, a *Paroxysm*, or fit of a fever. But nothing in the text implies, that the sharpness was on both sides. It is far more probable, that it was not; that St. Paul who had the right on his side (as he undoubtedly had) maintained it with love. *And Barnabas, taking Mark with him, sailed away to Cyprus*—Forfaking the work in which he was engaged, he went away to his own country.

V. 40. *But Paul departed*—Held on his intended course; *being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God*—We do not find that Barnabas staid for this: O how mighty is the grace of God! Which in the midst of the world, in the midst of sin, among so many snares of Satan, and in spite of the incredible weakness and depravity of nature; yet overcomes all opposition, sanctifies, sustains, and preserves us to the end!

It appears not only that Paul and Barnabas were afterwards throughly reconciled

(1 Cor. ix. 6. Gal. ii. 9.) but also that John was again admitted by St. Paul, as a companion in his labours, Col. iv. 10. Phil. ii. 24. 2 Tim. iv. 11.

V. 3. *He took and circumcised him, because of the Jews*—The unbelieving Jews, to whom he designed he should preach. For they would not have conversed with him at all, so long as he was uncircumcised.

V. 6. *And having gone through Phrygia*—And spoken there what was sufficient, as well as in the region of Galatia, *being forbid by the Spirit* (probably by an inward dictate) *to speak* as yet in the proconsular Asia, the time for it not being come.

V. 7. *Coming to Mysia, and passing it by, as being a part of Asia, they attempted to go into Bythinia; but the Spirit suffered them not*—Forbidding them as before. Sometimes a strong impression, for which we are not able to give any account, is not altogether to be despised.

V. 9. *A vision*

Myfia, they attempted to go to Bithynia ; but the spirit suffered them
 8 not. And passing by Myfia, they came down to Troas. And a vision
 9 appeared to Paul by night : a man of Macedonia stood and intreated
 10 him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And as soon as he
 had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia,
 assuredly inferring that the Lord called us to preach the gospel to them.
 11 Sailing therefore from Troas, we ran with a strait course to Samothracia,
 12 and the next day to Neapolis : And from thence to Philippi, which is
 the first city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony.
 13 And we abode in that city certain days. And on the sabbath we
 went out of the gate, by a river side, where prayer was wont to be
 made ; and sitting down, we spake to the women who were come
 14 together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple,
 of the city of Thyatira, a worshipper of God, heard ; whose heart
 the Lord opened to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul.

V. 9. *A vision appeared to Paul by night*—It was not a dream, though it was by night. No other dream is mentioned in the New Testament, than that of *Joseph* and of *Pilate's* wife. *A man of Macedonia*—Probably an angel clothed in the *Macedonian* habit, or using the language of the country, and representing the inhabitants of it. *Help us*—Against Satan, ignorance, and sin.

V. 10. *We sought to go into Macedonia*—This is the first place in which St. Luke intimates his attendance on the apostle. And here he does it only in an oblique manner. Nor does he throughout the history, once mention his own name, or any one thing, which he did or said for the service of Christianity. Though *Paul* speaks of him in the most honourable terms, (*Col.* iv. 14. *2 Tim.* iv. 11.) and probably, as the *brother, whose praise in the gospel went through all the churches*, (*2 Cor.* viii. 18.) The same remark may be made on the rest of the sacred historians, who every one of them shew the like amiable modesty.

V. 11. *We ran with a strait course*—Which

increased their confidence that God had called them.

V. 12. *The first city*—*Neapolis* was the first city they came to in that part of *Macedonia*, which was nearest to *Asia* : in that part which was farthest from it, *Philippi*. The river *Strymon* ran between them. *Philippi* was a *Roman* colony.

V. 13. *We went out of the gate*—The *Jews* usually held their religious assemblies (either by choice or constraint) at a distance from the Heathens : *by a river side*—Which was also convenient for purifying themselves. *Where prayer was wont to be made*—Though it does not appear, there was any house built there. *We spake*—At first in a familiar manner. *Paul* did not immediately begin to preach.

V. 14. *A worshipper of God*—Probably acquainted with the prophetic writings, *whose heart the Lord opened*—The *Greek* word properly refers to the opening of the eyes. And the heart has its eyes, (*Eph.* i. 18.) These are closed by nature. And to open them is the peculiar work of God.

V. 15. *She*

15 And when she was baptized and her family, she intreated *us* saying,
 Since ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my
 16 house and abide *there*. And she constrained us. And as we were
 going to prayer, a certain damsel possess'd by a spirit of divination
 17 met us, who brought her masters much gain by divining. She fol-
 lowing after Paul and us, cried out, saying, These men are servants
 of the Most High God, who declare to you the way of salvation.
 18 And this she did for many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and
 said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ, to come
 19 out of her. And he came out the same hour. But when her masters
 saw, that the hope of their gain was gone, laying hold of Paul and
 Silas, they dragged *them* into the Market-place to the magistrates,
 20 And having brought them to the pretors, they said, These men, being
 21 Jews, exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which it is not
 22 lawful for us, being Romans, to receive, neither to observe. And the
 multitude rose up together against them; and the pretors tearing off
 23 their garments, commanded to beat *them* with rods. And when they
 had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging
 24 the jailor to keep them safely: Who having received such a charge,
 thrust them into the inner prison, and secured their feet in the stocks.

V. 15. *She was baptized and her family*—Who can believe, that in so many families, there was no infant? Or, that the *Jews* who were so long accustomed to circumcise their children, would not now devote them to God by baptism? *She intreated us*—The souls of the faithful cleave to those, by whom they were gained to God. *She constrained us*—By her importunity. They did not immediately comply, lest any should imagine they sought their own profit, by coming into *Macedonia*.

V. 17. *These men are*—A great truth: but St. Paul did not need, nor would accept of such testimony.

V. 19. *The magistrates*—The supreme magistrates of the city. In the next verse they are called by a title, which often signifies *pretors*. These officers exercised both the military and civil authority.

V. 20. *Being Jews*—A nation peculiarly despised by the *Romans*.

V. 21. *And teach customs which it is not lawful for us to receive*—The world has received all the rules and doctrines of all the philosophers that ever were. But this is a property of gospel-truth; it has something in it peculiarly intolerable to the world.

V. 23. *They laid many stripes upon them*—Either they did not immediately say, they were *Romans*; or in the tumult, it was not regarded. *Charging the jailor*—Perhaps rather to quiet the people, than because they thought them criminal.

V. 24. *Secured their feet in the stocks*—These were probably those large pieces of wood, in use among the *Romans*, which not only loaded the legs of the prisoner, but also kept them extended in a very painful manner.

V. 25. *Paul*

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas having prayed, sung a hymn to God :
 26 and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earth-
 quake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and imme-
 diately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.
 27 And the jailor awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the doors of the
 prison opened, drew his sword, and was going to kill himself, supposing
 28 the prisoners were fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do
 29 thyself no harm ; for we are all here. Then he called for lights, and
 30 sprang in, and trembling, fell down before Paul and Silas. And having
 31 brought them out, he said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they
 said, believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy household.
 32 And they spake the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his
 33 house. And taking them that very hour of the night, he washed their
 stripes, and was immediately baptized, he and all his household.
 34 And having brought them up into his house, he set a table before them,
 and rejoiced, believing in God with his whole family.
 35 And when it was day, the pretors sent the serjeant, saying, Let those
 36 men go. And the jailor told Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you

V. 25. *Paul and Silas sung a hymn to God*—Notwithstanding weariness, hunger, stripes and blood. *And the prisoners heard*—A song with which they were not accustomed.

V. 28. *But Paul cried*—As they were all then in the dark, it is not easy to say, how Paul knew of the jailor's purpose ; unless it were by some immediate notice from God, which is by no means incredible. *With a loud voice*—Through earnestness, and because he was at some distance. *Do thyself no harm*—Although the Christian faith opens the prospect into another life, yet it absolutely forbids and effectually prevents a man's discharging himself from this.

V. 30. *Sirs*—He did not stile them so the day before. *What must I do to be saved ?*—From the guilt I feel, and the vengeance I fear. Undoubtedly God then set his sins in array before him, and convinced him in the clearest and strongest man-

ner, that the wrath of God abode upon him.

V. 31. *Thou shalt be saved, and thy household*—If ye believe. They did so, and were saved.

V. 33. *He washed their stripes*—It should not be forgot, that the apostles had not the power of working miraculous cures when they pleased, either on themselves, or their dearest friends. Nor was it expedient they should ; since it would have frustrated many wise designs of God, which were answered by their sufferings.

V. 34. *He set a table before them and rejoiced*—Faith makes a man joyful, prudent, liberal.

V. 35. *The pretors sent*—Being probably terrified by the earthquake ; *saying, Let those men go*—How different from the charge given a few hours before ? And how great an ease to the mind of the jailor ?

37 go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said to them,
They have beaten us publickly, uncondemned, and have cast us into
prison, who are Romans: and do they now thrust us out privately?
38 Nay verily: but let them come themselves and conduct us out. And
the serjeants reported these words to the pretors; and they were afraid
39 when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and com-
forted them; and conducting *them* out, requested that they would depart
40 from the city. And coming out of the prison, they entered into *the house*
of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and
departed.

XVII. And having journeyed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they
2 came to Theffalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And
Paul, according to his custom, went in to them, and three sabbath days
3 discoursed with them from the Scriptures. Opening *them* and evincing,
That Christ ought to suffer, and to rise from the dead, and that this is
4 the Christ, *even* Jesus, whom I declare unto you. And some of them
believed, and were joined to Paul and Silas, and a great number of the

V. 37. *They have beaten us publickly, who are Romans*—St. Paul does not always plead this privilege. But in a country where they were entire strangers, such treatment might have brought upon them a suspicion of having been guilty of some uncommon crime, and so have hindered the course of the gospel.

V. 40. *When they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed*—Though many circumstances now invited their stay, yet they wisely complied with the request of the magistrates, that they might not seem to express any degree of obstinacy or revenge, or give any suspicion of a design to stir up the people.

V. 1. *And taking their journey through Amphipolis and Apollonia*—St. Luke seems to have been left at *Philippi*, and to have continued in those parts, travelling from place to place among the churches, till St. Paul returned thither. For here he leaves off speaking of himself as one of St. Paul's

company; neither does he resume that stile, till we find them together there: (ch. xx. 5, 6.) After this he constantly uses it to the end of the history. *Amphipolis* and *Apollonia* were cities of *Macedonia*.

V. 2. *And Paul, according to his custom*—Of doing all things, as far as might be in a regular manner, *went in to them three sabbath days*—Not excluding the days between.

V. 4. *Of the principal women not a few*—Our free-thinkers pique themselves, upon observing, That women are more religious than men; and this, in compliment both to religion and good manners, they impute to the weakness of their understandings. And indeed as far as nature can go, in imitating religion by performing the outward acts of it, this picture of religion may make a fairer show in women than in men, both by reason of their more tender passions, and their modesty, which will make those actions appear to more advantage.

5 devout Greeks, and not a few of the principal women. But the Jews who believed not, filled with zeal, taking to them some of the mean and profligate fellows, and making a mob, set all the city in an uproar; and assailing the house of Jason, sought to bring them out to the
6 people. But not finding them, they dragged Jason and certain brethren to the rulers of the city, crying aloud, These men, that have turned
7 the world upside down, are come hither also: Whom Jason hath privately received; and all these men act contrary to the decrees of
8 Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. And they alarmed the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these
9 things. However having taken security of Jason, and of the rest, they let them go.

10 But the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night to
11 Berea, who coming *thither*, went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more ingenuous than those of Thessalonica, receiving the word with all readiness of mind, *and* daily searching the Scriptures, whether
12 those things were so? Therefore many of them believed, and of the Grecian women of considerable rank, and of the men not a few.
13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica knew that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea also, they came thither likewise, and stirred
14 up the multitude. Then the brethren sent away Paul immediately, to go as it were to the sea; but Silas and Timothy continued
15 there. And they that conducted Paul, brought him as far as Athens, and having received an order to Silas and Timothy, to come to him with all speed, they departed.

16 Now, while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was

rage. But in the case of true religion, which always implies taking up the cross, especially in time of persecution, women lie naturally under a great disadvantage, as having less courage than men. So that their embracing the gospel was a stronger evidence of the power of him whose strength is perfected in weakness, as a stronger assistance of the holy spirit was needful for them to overcome their natural feebleness.

V. 11. *These were more ingenuous*—or *generous*. To be teachable in the things of

God, is true generosity of soul. The *receiving the word with all readiness of mind*, and the most accurate search into the truth are well consistent.

V. 12. *Many of them*—Of the *Jews*. *And of the Grecian women*—Who were followed by their husbands.

V. 16. *While Paul was waiting for them*—Having no design, as it seems, to preach at *Athens*. But his zeal for God drew him into it unawares, without staying till his companions came.

- 17 provoked within him, seeing the city wholly given to idolatry. He therefore discoursed in the synagogue to the Jews, and the devout persons, and in the Market-place daily to those whom he met with.
- 18 Then some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him: and some said, What would this babler say? Others, he seemeth to be a proclaimer of strange gods; because he preached to them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine is, which is spoken by thee?
- 20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would therefore know, what these things mean? (For all the Athenians, and strangers sojourning there, spent their time in nothing else, but telling or hearing some new thing.)
- 22 Then Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said; Ye men-

V. 18. *Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers*—The *Epicureans* entirely denied a providence, and held the world to be the effect of mere chance; asserting sensual pleasure to be man's chief good, and that the soul and body died together. The *Stoics* held, that matter was eternal; that all things were governed by irresistible fate; that virtue was its own sufficient reward, and vice its own sufficient punishment. It is easy to see, how happily the apostle levels his discourse at some of the most important errors of each, while, without expressly attacking either, he gives a plain summary of his own religious principles. *What would this babler say?*—Such is the language of natural reason, full of, and satisfied with itself. Yet even here St. Paul had some fruit; though no where less than at Athens. And no wonder, since this city was a seminary of philosophers, who have ever been the pest of true religion. *He seemeth to be a proclaimer*—This he returns upon them at the 23d. verse: *of strange Gods*—Such as are not known even at Athens. *Because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection*—A god and a goddess. And as stupid as this mistake was, it is the less to be wondered at; since the *Athenians*

might as well count the resurrection a deity, as shame, famine, and many others.

V. 19. The *Areopagus*, or hill of *Mars*, (dedicated to *Mars*, the Heathen god of war) was the place where the *Athenians* held their supreme court of judicature. But it does not appear he was carried thither as a criminal. The original number of its judges was twelve; but afterwards it increased to three hundred. These were generally men of the greatest families in *Athens*, and were famed for justice and integrity.

V. 21. *And the strangers sojourning there*—And catching the distemper of them. *Some new thing*—The *Greek* word signifies some *newer* thing. New things quickly grew cheap, and they wanted those that were *newer* still.

V. 22. *Then Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus*—An ample theatre! *Said*—Giving them a lecture of natural divinity, with admirable wisdom, acuteness, fulness, and courtesy. They enquire after new things: *Paul*, in his divinely-philosophical discourse, begins with the first and goes on to the last things, both which were new things to them. He points out the origin and end of all things, concerning which they

23 of Athens, I perceive that ye are greatly addicted to the worship of invisible powers. For as I passed along and beheld the objects of your worship, I found an altar, on which was inscribed, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD: him therefore whom ye worship without know-
 24 ing him, I proclaim unto you. God who made the world and all things therein, being the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in
 25 temples made with hands: Neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed any thing, he himself giving to all life, and
 26 breath, and all things. And he hath made of one blood the whole nation of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation:
 27 That they might seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find
 28 him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live,

they had so many disputes, and equally refutes both the *Epicurean* and *Stoic*. *I perceive*—With what clearness and freedom does he speak! *Paul against Athens!*

V. 23. *I found an altar*—Some suppose this was set up by *Socrates*, to express in a covert way, his devotion to the only true God, while he derided the plurality of the Heathen gods, for which he was condemned to death: and others, that whoever erected this altar, did it in honour to the God of *Israel*, of whom there was no image, and whose name *Jehovah* was never made known to the idolatrous *Gentiles*. *Him proclaim I unto you*—Thus he fixes the wandering attention of these blind philosophers: proclaiming to them an *unknown*, and yet not a new God.

V. 24. *God who made the world*—Thus is demonstrated even to reason, the one, true, good God; absolutely different from the creatures, from every part of the visible creation.

V. 25. *Neither is he served as though he needed any thing* or person—The *Greek* word equally takes in both. *To all*—That live and breathe; *life*—In him we live; and *breathe*—In him we move. By breathing, life is continued, I breathe this moment:

the next is not in my power: and all things —For in him we are. So exactly do the parts of this discourse answer each other.

V. 26. *He hath made of one blood the whole nation of men*—By this expression the apostle shewed them in the most unaffected manner, that though he was a *Jew*, he was not enslaved to any narrow views, but looked on all mankind as his brethren: *Having determined the times*—That it is God who gave men the earth to inhabit. *Paul* proves from the order of times and places, shewing the highest wisdom of the disposer, superior to all human counsels. *And the bounds of their habitation*—By mountains, seas, rivers, and the like.

V. 27. *If haply*—The way is open; God is ready to be found. But he will lay no force upon man; *They might feel after him*—This is in the midst between seeking and finding. Feeling being the lowest and grossest of all our senses, is fitly applied to that low knowledge of God; *Though he be not far from every one of us*—We need not go far to seek or find him. He is very near us; in us. It is only perverse reason which thinks he is afar off.

V. 28. *In him*—Not in ourselves, *we live and move, and have our being*—This denotes his

and move, and have our being; as certain likewise of your own poets
 29 have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the offspring of
 God, we ought not to think the Godhead is like gold, or silver, or
 30 stone, graven by art and contrivance of man. The times of igno-
 rance indeed God overlooked; but he now commandeth all men every
 31 where to repent, Because he hath appointed a day, in which he
 will judge the world righteously, by the man whom he hath or-
 dained, *whereof* he hath given assurance to all *men*, in that he hath
 32 raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection
 from the dead, some mocked: but others said, We will hear thee

his necessary, intimate, and most efficacious presence. No words can better express the continual and necessary dependance of all created beings, in their existence and all their operations, on the first and almighty cause, which the truest philosophy as well as divinity teaches. *As certain also of your own poets have said—Aratus*, whose words these are, was an *Athenian*, who lived almost three hundred years before this time. They are likewise to be found with the alteration of one letter only, in the hymn of *Cleanthes* to *Jupiter*, or the Supreme Being, one of the purest and finest pieces of natural religion in the whole world of Pagan antiquity.

V. 29. *We ought not to think*—A tender expression; especially in the first person plural. As if he had said, Can God himself be a less noble Being, than we who are his offspring? Nor does he only here deny, That these are like God, but that they have any analogy to him at all, so as to be capable of representing him.

V. 30. *The times of ignorance*—What! Does he object ignorance to the knowing *Athenians*? Yes, and they acknowledged it by this very altar. *God overlooked*—As one paraphrases it, “The beams of his eye did in a manner shoot over it.” He did not appear to take any notice of them, by sending express messages to them, as he did to the *Jews*. *But now*—This day, this

hour, saith *Paul*, puts an end to the divine forbearance, and brings either greater mercy or punishment. Now *he commandeth all men every where to repent*—There is a dignity and grandeur in this expression, becoming an ambassador from the king of heaven. And this universal demand of repentance, declared universal guilt in the strongest manner, and admirably confronted the pride of the haughtiest Stoic of them all. At the same time it bore down the idle plea of fatality. For how could any one repent of doing, what he could not but have done?

V. 31. *He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world*—How fitly does he speak this, in their supreme court of justice? *By the man*—So he speaks, suiting himself to the capacity of his hearers. *Whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*—God raising *Jesus*, demonstrated hereby, That he was to be the glorious judge of all. We are by no means to imagine, that this was all, which the apostle intended to have said. But the indolence of some of his hearers, and the petulance of others cut him short.

V. 32. *Some mocked*—Interrupting him thereby. They took offence at that which is the principal motive of faith, from the pride of reason. And having once stumbled at this, they rejected all the rest.

V. 33. So

33 again concerning this. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit,
34 some clave to him and believed : among whom *was* even Dionysius the
Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

XVIII. After these things, Paul departing from Athens, came to Corinth.

2 And finding a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with Priscilla his wife (because Claudius had commanded all
3 the Jews to depart from Rome) he went to them. And as he was of the same trade, he abode with them and wrought, for they were tent-makers
4 by trade. And he discoursed in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and Greeks.

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Christ.
6 But when they set themselves in opposition and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said to them, Your blood *is* upon your own head ; I am
7 pure : from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles. And going thence he

V. 33. *So Paul departed*—Leaving his hearers divided in their judgment.

V. 34. *Among whom was even Dionysius the Areopagite*—One of the judges of that court : on whom some spurious writings have been fathered in later ages, by those who were fond of high-sounding nonsense.

V. 1. *Paul departing from Athens*—He did not stay there long. The philosophers there were too easy, too indolent, and too wise in their own eyes to receive the gospel.

V. 2. *Claudius, the Roman emperor, had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome*—All who were *Jews* by birth. Whether they were *Jews* or Christians by religion, the *Romans* were too stately to regard.

V. 3. *They were tent-makers by trade*—For it was a rule among the *Jews* (and why is it not among the Christians ?) to bring up all their children to some trade, were they ever so rich or noble.

V. 5. *And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia*—Silas seems to have staid a considerable time at *Berea* ; but *Timotheus* had come to the apostle while he was at *Athens*, and been sent by him to com-

fort and confirm the church at *Thessalonica*. (1 *Thessal.* iii. 1—5.) But now at length both *Silas* and *Timotheus* came to the apostle at *Corinth*. *Paul was pressed in spirit*—The more, probably, from what *Silas* and *Timotheus* related. Every Christian ought diligently to observe any such pressure in his own spirit, and if it agree with Scripture, to follow it : if he does not, he will feel great heaviness.

V. 6. *He shook his raiment*—To signify he would from that time, refrain from them ; and to intimate, That God would soon shake them off as unworthy to be numbered among his people. *I am pure*—None can say this, but he that has borne a full testimony against sin. *From henceforth I will go to the Gentiles*—But not to them altogether. He did not break off all intercourse with the *Jews* even at *Corinth*. Only he preached no more in their synagogue.

V. 7. *He went into the house of one named Justus*—A *Gentile*, and preached there : though probably he still lodged with *Aquila*.

V. 8. *And*

went into the house of one named Justus, *one* that worshipped God; 8 whose house was adjoining to the synagogue. And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house, and many of the 9 Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized. Then the Lord said to Paul by a vision, in the night, Fear not, but speak, and hold not thy 10 peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; 11 for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months teaching the word of God among them.

12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made an assault with one consent upon Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat, 13 Saying, This *fellow* persuaded men to worship God contrary to the law. 14 And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, If it were an act of injustice, or wicked licentiousness, O ye Jews, reason 15 would that I should bear with you. But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of 16 these matters. And he drove them away from the judgment-seat. 17 Then they all took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things.

V. 8. *And many hearing*—The conversation of *Crispus*, and the preaching of *Paul*.

V. 10. *I am with thee*: therefore *fear not* all the learning, grandeur, or power, of the inhabitants of this city. *Speak, and hold not thy peace*—For thy labour shall not be in vain. *For I have much people in this city*—So he prophetically calls them that afterwards believed.

V. 11. *He continued there a year and six months*—A long time! But how few souls are now gained, in a longer time than this? Who is in the fault? Generally both teachers and hearers.

V. 12. *When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia*—Of which *Corinth* was the chief city. This *Gallio*, the brother of the famous *Seneca*, is much commended both by him and by other writers, for the sweetness and generosity of his temper, and easiness of his

behaviour. Yet one thing he lacked! but he knew it not, and had no concern about it.

V. 15. *But if it be*—He speaks with the utmost coolness and contempt, *a question of names*—The names of the heathen gods were fables and shadows. But the question concerning the name of *Jesus* is of more importance than all things else under heaven. Yet there is this singularity (among a thousand others) in the Christian religion, that human reason, curious as it is in all other things, abhors to enquire into it.

V. 17. *Then they all took Sosthenes*—The successor of *Crispus*, and probably *Paul's* chief accuser, *and beat him*—It seems because he had occasioned them so much trouble to no purpose, *before the judgment seat*—One can hardly think in the sight of *Gallio*, though at no great distance from him.

18 And Paul still continued many days; and *then* taking leave of the brethren, sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, 19 having shaved his head at Cenchrea: for he had a vow. And he came to Ephesus and left them there; but he himself going into the synagogue, 20 reasoned with the Jews. But though they intreated *him* to tarry longer with them, he consented not: But took his leave of them, saying, I must by all means keep the approaching feast at Jerusalem, but I will return to 22 you again, if God will. And he set sail for Ephesus. And landing at Cefarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch. 23 And having spent some time *there*, he departed and went through the country of Galatia and Phrygia, in order, confirming all the disciples. 24 Now a certain Jew, Apollos by name, born at Alexandria, an eloquent 25 man, mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit he spake and taught diligently the things of Jesus, knowing only the baptism of 26 John. And he spake boldly in the synagogue. And Aquila and Prif-

him. And it seems to have had a happy effect. For *Sosthenes* himself was afterwards a Christian. 1 Cor. i. 1.

V. 18. *Paul continued many days*—After the year and six months to confirm the brethren. *Aquila having shaved his head*—As was the custom in a vow. (ch. xxi. 24. *Numb.* vi. 18.) *At Cenchrea*—sea-port town, at a small distance from *Corinth*.

V. 21. *I must by all means keep the feast at Jerusalem*—This was not from any apprehension, that he was obliged in conscience to keep the *Jewish* feasts: but to take the opportunity of meeting a great number of his countrymen to whom he might preach *Christ*, or whom he might farther instruct, or free from the prejudices they had imbibed against him. *But I will return to you*—So he did, ch. xix. 1.

V. 22. *And landing at Cefarea he went up*—Immediately to *Jerusalem*; and *saluted the church*—Eminently so called, being the mother-church of Christian believers: *And having kept the feast there, he went down from thence to Antioch*.

V. 23. *He went over the country of Galatia*

and *Phrygia*—It is supposed, spending about four years therein, including the time he staid at *Ephesus*.

V. 24. *An eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures*—Of the Old Testament. Every talent may be of use in the kingdom of God, if joined with knowledge of the Scriptures and fervor of spirit.

V. 25. *This man had been instructed*—Though not perfectly, *in the way of the Lord*—In the doctrine of *Christ*. *Knowing only the baptism of John*—Only what *John* taught those whom he baptized, namely, To repent and believe in a *Messiah* shortly to appear.

V. 26. *He spake*—Privately; and *taught*—Publickly. Probably he returned to live at *Alexandria*, soon after he had been baptized by *John*; and so had no opportunity of being fully acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel, as delivered by *Christ* and his apostles. *And explained to him the way of God more perfectly*—He who knows *Christ*, is able to instruct even those that are *mighty in the scripture*.

cilla hearing him, took him to their house, and explained to him the
 27 way of God more perfectly. And when he was desirous to go over to
 Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him:
 who being come thither, greatly helped through grace them that had
 28 believed. For he earnestly debated with the Jews in publick, shewing by
 the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.

XIX. Now while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through
 the upper parts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, He
 said to them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed?
 2 And they said to him, Nay we have not so much as heard, Whether
 3 there be any Holy Ghost. He said to them, Into what then were ye
 4 baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John
 baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe
 5 on him that was to come after him, that is, on Jesus. And hearing *this*,
 6 they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And Paul laying
his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake
 7 with tongues and prophesied. And they were in all about twelve men.
 8 And going into the synagogue, he spake boldly, for three months dis-
 coursing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

V. 27. *Who greatly helped through grace*—It is through grace only that any gift of any one is profitable to another. *Them that had believed*—Apollos did not plant, but water. This was the peculiar gift which he had received. And he was better able to convince the *Jews*, than to convert the Heathens.

V. 1. *Having passed through Galatia and Phrygia*, which were termed *The upper parts of Asia Minor*—*Certain disciples*—Who had been formerly baptized by *John the Baptist*, and since imperfectly instructed in Christianity.

V. 2. *Have ye received the Holy Ghost?*—The extraordinary gifts of the spirit, as well as his sanctifying graces? *We have not so much as heard*—Whether there be any such gifts.

V. 3. *Into what were ye baptized?*—Into what dispensation? To the sealing of what doctrine? *Into John's baptism*—We were baptized by *John*, and believe what he taught.

V. 4. *John baptized*—That is, the whole baptism and preaching of *John* pointed at *Christ*. After this, *John* is mentioned no more in the New Testament. Here he gives way to *Christ* altogether.

V. 5. *And hearing this, they were baptized*—By some other. *Paul only laid his hands upon them*. *They were baptized*—They were baptized twice; but not with the same baptism. *John* did not administer that baptism, which *Christ* afterwards commanded, that is, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

V. 9. *The*

9 But when some were hardened and believed not, but spake reproachfully of the way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated
 10 the disciples, discoursing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this was done for the space of two years, so that all the inhabitants of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.
 11, 12 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, So that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits came out of them.
 13 And some of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, undertook to name the name of the Lord Jesus, over those who had evil spirits, saying, We
 14 adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven
 15 sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did this. But the evil spirit answering said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?
 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaping upon them, and getting the mastery of them, prevailed against them, so that they fled out
 17 of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all both Jews and Greeks dwelling at Ephesus, and fear fell on them all, and
 18 the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many of those who
 19 believed came, confessing and openly declaring their deeds. Many also

V. 9. *The way*—The Christian way of worshipping God: *He departed*—Leaving them their synagogue to themselves; *Discoursing daily*—Not on the sabbath only, in the school of one Tyrannus—Which we do not find was any otherwise consecrated, than by preaching the gospel there.

V. 10. *All* who desired it among the inhabitants of the proconsular Asia, now heard the word: St. Paul had been forbidden to preach it in Asia before; (ch. xvi. 6.) But now the time was come.

V. 11. *Special miracles*—Wrought in a very uncommon manner.

V. 12. *Evil spirits*—Who also occasioned many of those diseases, which yet might appear to be purely natural.

V. 13. *Exorcists*—Several of the Jews about this time pretended to a power of casting out devils, particularly by certain arts or charms, supposed to be derived

from Solomon. *Undertook to name*—Vain undertaking! Satan laughs at all those, who attempt to expel him either out of the bodies or the souls of men but by divine faith. All the light of reason is nothing, to the craft and strength of that subtle spirit. His craft cannot be known but by the spirit of God; nor can his strength be conquered, but by the power of faith.

V. 17. *And the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified*—So that even the malice of the devil wrought for the furtherance of the gospel.

V. 18. *Many came, confessing*—Of their own accord, and openly declaring their deeds—The efficacy of God's word, penetrating the inmost recesses of their soul, wrought that free and open confession to which perhaps even torments would not have compelled them.

V. 19. *Curious arts*—Magical arts, to which

of those who had practised curious arts, bringing their books together, burnt them before all men, and they computed the value of them, and
 20 found it fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. So powerfully did the word of God grow and prevail.

21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in spirit, having passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have
 22 been there, I must see Rome also. And having sent two of those who ministered to him, Timotheus and Erastus, to Macedonia, he himself
 23 staid in Asia for a season. And about that time there arose no small
 24 tumult concerning the way. For a man named Demetrius, a silver-smith, who made silver shrines of Diana, procured no small gain
 25 to the artificers: Whom having gathered together, with the workmen employed in such things, he said, Sirs, ye know that our maintenance
 26 arises from this occupation. But ye see and hear, that not at Ephesus only, but almost through all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned
 27 aside much people, saying, that they are not gods, which are made with hands: So that there is danger not only that this our craft should come

which that soft appellation was given by those who practised them. *Ephesus* was peculiarly famous for these. And as these practices were of so much reputation there, it is no wonder the books which taught them should bear a great price. *Bringing their books together*—As it were by common consent. *burnt them*—Which was far better than selling them, even though the money had been given to the poor. *Fifty thousand pieces of silver*—If these pieces of silver be taken for *Jewish* shekels, the sum will amount to six thousand two hundred and fifty pounds.

V. 20. *So powerfully did the word of God grow*—In extent, and prevail—In power and efficacy.

V. 21. *After these things were ended*—Paul fought not to rest, but pressed on as if he had yet done nothing. He is already possessed of *Ephesus* and *Asia*. He purposes for *Macedonia* and *Achaia*. He has his eye upon *Jerusalem*; then upon *Rome*; afterwards on *Spain*. (*Rom. xv. 26.*) No *Cæsar*,

no *Alexander the Great*, no other hero, comes up to the magnanimity of this little *Benjamite*. Faith and love to God and man, had enlarged his heart, even as the sand of the sea.

V. 24. *Silver shrines*—Silver models of that famous temple, which were bought not only by the citizens, but by strangers from all parts. *The artificers*—The other silver-smiths.

V. 25. *The workmen*—Employed by him and them.

V. 26. *Saying, that they are not gods, which are made with hands*—This manifestly shews, that the contrary opinion did then generally prevail, namely, that there was a real divinity in their sacred images. Though some of the latter heathens spoke of them just as the Romanists do now.

V. 27. *There is danger, not only that this our craft [trade] should come into disgrace, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised*—No wonder a discourse should make so deep an impression, which

into disgrace, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her majesty destroyed, whom all Asia and the world
 28 worshippeth. And hearing *this*, they were filled with rage, and cried out,
 29 saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled
 with confusion; and they rushed with one accord into the theatre,
 dragging with them Caius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's
 30 fellow-travellers. And when Paul would have gone in to the people,
 31 the disciples would not suffer him. And some also of the principal
 officers of Asia, being his friends, sent to him and desired, that he would
 32 not venture himself into the theatre. Some therefore cried one thing,
 and some another; for the assembly was confused, and the greater part
 33 did not know for what they were come together. And they thrust
 Alexander forward from among the multitude, the Jews pushing him on;
 and Alexander, waving with his hand, would have made a defence to
 34 the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew, one voice arose
 from them all, crying out, for about two hours, Great is Diana of the
 35 Ephesians. But the register, having pacified the people, said, Ye men of
 Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not, that the city of the

which was edged both by interest and superstition. *The great goddess* was one of the standing titles of *Diana*. *Her majesty destroyed*—Miserable majesty, which was capable of being thus destroyed! *Whom all Asia and the world*—That is, the Roman empire. *worshippeth*—Although under a great variety of titles and characters. But the multitude of those that err, does not turn error into truth.

V. 29. *They rushed with one accord*—*Demetrius* and his company, *into the theatre*—Where criminals were wont to be thrown to the wild beasts *dragging with them Caius and Aristarchus*—When they could not find *Paul*. Probably they hoped to oblige them to fight with the wild beasts, as some think *St. Paul* had done before.

V. 30. *When Paul would have gone in to the people*—Being above all fear, to plead the cause of his companions, and prove they are not gods which are made with hands.

V. 31. *The principal officers of all Asia*—

The *Asian* priests, who presided over the public games, which they were then celebrating in honour of *Diana*.

V. 32. *The greater part did not know for what they were come together*—Which is commonly the case in such assemblies.

V. 33. *And they thrust forward*—Namely, the artificers and workmen. *Alexander*—Probably some well-known Christian whom they saw in the crowd: *The Jews pushing him on*—To expose him to the more danger. *And Alexander waving with his hand*—In token of desiring silence. *would have made a defence*—For himself and his brethren.

V. 34. *But when they knew that he was a Jew*—And consequently an enemy to their worship of images.

V. 35. *The register*—Probably the chief governor of the public games. *The image which fell down from Jupiter*—They believed that very image of *Diana*, which stood in her temple, *fell down from Jupiter in heaven*. Perhaps he designed to insinuate, as if falling

Ephesians is a worshipper of the great Diana, and of the *image* which
 36 fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then these things cannot be denied,
 37 ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought
 these men, who are neither robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of your
 38 goddesses. If then Demetrius and the artificers that are with him, have a
 charge against any one, the courts are held, and there are proconsuls: let
 39 them implead one another. But if ye enquire any thing concerning
 40 other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. And indeed
 we are in danger to be questioned for sedition, concerning this day;
 41 there being no cause, whereby we can account for this concourse. And
 having said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

XX. And after the tumult was ceased, Paul having called the disciples
 2 to him, and exhorted *them*, departed to go into Macedonia. And having
 gone through those parts, and exhorted them with much discourse,
 3 he came into Greece. And having abode *there* three months, an ambush
 being laid for him by the Jews, as he was about to sail into Syria, he
 4 determined to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him
 to Asia, Sopater of Berea, and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus, and
 Secundus, and Caius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus,
 5 and Trophimus, These going before, staid for us at Troas. And we set
 6 sail for Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came to them
 7 at Troas in five days, where we abode seven days. And on the first day

ling down from *Jupiter*, it was not made with hands, and so was not that sort of idols, which Paul had said were no gods.

V. 37. *Nor blasphemers of your goddesses*—They simply declared the One God, and the vanity of idols in general.

V. 38. *There are proconsuls*—One in every province. There was one at *Ephesus*.

V. 39. *In a lawful assembly*—In such a regular assembly as has authority to judge of religious and political affairs.

V. 40. *This concourse*—He wisely calls it by an inoffensive name.

V. 1. *After the tumult was ceased*—So Demetrius gained nothing. Paul remained there till all was quiet.

V. 2. *He came into Greece*—That part of it, which lay between Macedonia and Achaia.

V. 3. *An ambush being laid for him*—In his way to the ship.

V. 4. *To Asia*—There some of them left him. But Trophimus went with him to Jerusalem, (ch. xxi 29.) Aristarchus, even to Rome. (ch. xxvii. 2.)

V. 6. *We set sail*—St. Luke was now with St. Paul again, as we learn from his manner of expressing himself.

V. 7. *To break bread*—That is, to celebrate the Lord's supper; continued his discourse—Through uncommon fervor of spirit.

V. 8. *There*

of the week, when we were met together to break bread, Paul being to depart on the morrow, preached to them, and continued his discourse 8 till midnight. And there were many lamps in the upper room where 9 they were assembled. And a certain young man, named Eutychus, sitting in the window, fell into a deep sleep; and as Paul still continued his discourse, being overpowered with sleep, he fell down from the 10 third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down and fell on him; and taking *him* in his arms said, Be not troubled; for his life 11 is in him. And going up again, and having broken bread, he conversed 12 long with them, even till break of day, and so departed. And they 13 brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted. But we going before into the ship, sailed to Assos, where we were to take 14 up Paul; for so he had appointed, being himself to go on foot. And 15 when he met us at Assos, we took him up, and came to Mitylene. And sailing thence, we came the following day over against Chios, and the next *day* we touched at Samos, and having tarried at Trogyllium, 16 the day after came to Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, that he might not spend any time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible, to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. 17 And sending to Ephesus from Miletus, he called thither the elders

V. 8. *There were many lamps in the room where they were assembled*—To prevent any possible scandal.

V. 9. *In the window*—Doublets kept open, to prevent heat, both from the lamps, and the number of people.

V. 10. *Paul fell on him*—It is observable, our Lord never used this gesture. But *Elijah* and *Elisha* did as well as *Paul*. *His life is in him*—He is alive again.

V. 11. *So departed*—Without taking any rest at all.

V. 12. *And they brought the young man alive*—But alas! how many of those who have allowed themselves to sleep under sermons, or as it were, to dream awake, have slept the sleep of eternal death and fallen to rise no more!

V. 13. *Being himself to go on foot*—That he might enjoy the company of his Chris-

tian brethren a little longer: although he had passed the night without sleep, and though *Assos* was of difficult and dangerous access by land.

V. 14. *Mitylene*—Was a city and port of the isle of *Lesbos*, about seven miles distant from the *Asiatic* coast.

V. 16. *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus*—Which lay on the other side of the Bay. *He hasted to be at Jerusalem on the day of pentecost*—Because then was the greatest concourse of people.

V. 17. *Sending to Ephesus, he called the elders of the church*—These are called *Bishops* in the 28th verse, (rendered *overseers* in our translation.) Perhaps, *Elders* and *Bishops* then the same: or no otherwise different than are the Rector of a parish and his Curates.

V. 18. Ye

18 of the church. And when they were come to him, he said to them,
 Ye know in what manner I have conversed among you, all the time from
 19 the first day I came into Asia, Serving the Lord with all humility, and
 with tears, and trials which beset me through the ambushes of the Jews:
 20 And that I have withheld nothing which was profitable, but have
 preached to you, and taught you publickly and from house to house:
 21 Testifying both to Jews and Greeks repentance toward God and faith
 in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 22 And now being bound by the spirit, I go to Jerusalem, not knowing
 23 the things that shall beset me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth
 24 to me in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions await me. But
 none of these things move me; nor do I count my life precious to
 myself, so I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have
 received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.
 25 And now I know that ye all among whom I have conversed, pro-
 26 claiming the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore

V. 18. *Ye know*—Happy is he who can thus appeal to the conscience of his hearers.

V. 19. *Serving*—See the picture of a faithful servant! *The Lord*—Whose the church is, *with all humility, and with tears, and trials*—These are the concomitants of it. The service itself is described more particularly in the following verse. This humility he recommends to the *Ephesians* themselves, *Eph. iv. 2.* His tears are mentioned again, ver. 31. as also *2 Cor. ii. 4.* *Phil. iii. 18.* These passages laid together, supply us with the genuine character of St. Paul. Holy tears, from those who seldom weep on account of natural occurrences, are no mean specimen of the efficacy, and proof of the truth of Christianity. Yet joy is well consistent therewith (ver. 24.) The same person may be *sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.*

V. 20. *I have preached*—Publickly and taught—From house to house. Else he had not been pure from their blood. For even an apostle could not discharge his duty by public preaching only. How much less can an ordinary Pastor?

V. 21. *Repentance toward God*—The very first motion of the soul toward God, is a kind of repentance.

V. 22. *Bound by the spirit*—Strongly impelled by him.

V. 23. *Save that*—Only this I know in general; *The Holy Ghost witnesseth*—By other means. Such was God's good pleasure, to reveal these things to him not immediately, but by the ministry of others.

V. 24. *Nor do I count my life precious*—It adds great force to this and all the other passages of scripture, in which the apostles express their contempt of the world, that they were not uttered by persons like *Seneca* and *Antonius*, who talked elegantly of despising the world, in the full affluence of all its enjoyments: but by men who daily underwent the greatest calamities, and exposed their lives in proof of their assertions.

V. 25. *Ye shall see my face no more*—He wisely inserts this, that what follows might make the deeper impression.

V. 27. *For*

I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men* :
 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.
 28 Take heed therefore to yourselves and to the whole flock, in which the
 Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which
 29 he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my
 departure grievous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the
 30 flock. Yea, from among yourselves men will arise, speaking perverse
 31 things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, remembering
 that for three years, I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with
 tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his
 grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance
 33 among all them that are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver,
 31 or gold, or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have
 35 ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have

V. 27. *For I have not shunned*—Otherwise if any had perished, their blood would have been on his head.

V. 28. *Take heed therefore*—I now devote my care upon you; first to yourselves, then to the flock in which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers—For no man or number of men upon earth can constitute an overseer, Bishop, or any other Christian minister. To do this, is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost: To feed the church of God—That is, the believing, loving, holy children of God; which he hath purchased—How precious is it then in his sight! *With his own blood*—For it is the blood of the only-begotten Son of God. 1 John i. 7.

V. 29. *Grievous wolves*—From without, namely, false apostles. They had not yet broke in on the church at Ephesus.

V. 30. *Yea, from among yourselves men will arise*—Such were the Nicolaitans, of whom Christ complains. Rev. ii. 6. To draw away disciples—From the purity of the gospel, and the unity of the body.

V. 31. *I ceased not to warn every one night and day*—This was watching indeed! Who copies after this example?

V. 32. *The word of his grace*—It is the grand channel of it, to believers, as well as unbelievers. *Who is able to build you up*—To confirm and increase your faith, love, holiness. God can thus build us up, without any instrument. But he does build us up by them. O beware of dreaming, that you have less need of human teachers after you know Christ than before! *And to give you an inheritance*—Of eternal glory, among them that are sanctified—And so made meet for it. A large number of these Paul doubtless knew, and remembered before God.

V. 33. *I have coveted*—Here the apostle begins the other branch of his farewell discourse, like old Samuel (1 Sam. xii. 3.) taking his leave of the children of Israel.

V. 34. *These hands*—Callous, as you see, with labour. Who is he that envies such a Bishop or Archbishop as this?

V. 35. *I have shewed you*—Bishops, by my example; *all things*—And this among the rest; *that thus labouring*—So far as the labours of your office allow you time; *ye ought to help the weak*—Those who are disabled by sickness, or any bodily infirmity.

shewed you all things, that thus labouring ye ought to help the weak,
 and to remember the word of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said,
 36 It is happier to give than to receive. And having said these things,
 37 he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept fore,
 38 and falling on Paul's neck kissed him, Sorrowing most for that word which
 he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they conducted
 him to the ship.

XXI. And when we were torne away from them, and had set sail, we ran
 with a strait course to Coos, and the next day to Rhodes, and thence
 2 to Patara. And finding a ship passing over to Phenicia, we went aboard
 3 and set sail. And coming within sight of Cyprus, and leaving *it* on the
 left-hand, we sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was
 4 to unload her burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven
 5 days, who told Paul by the Spirit, not to go up to Jerusalem. But
 when we had finished these days, we departed and went our way; and
 they all attended us out of the city, with their wives and children:
 6 and kneeling down on the sea-shore we prayed. And having embraced
 7 each other we took ship, and they returned home. And having finished.

from maintaining themselves by their own labour. *And to remember*—Effectually, so as to follow it; *the word which he himself said*—Without doubt his disciples remembered many of his words which are not recorded; *It is happier to give*—To imitate God, and have him as it were, indebted to us.

V. 37. *They all wept*—Of old, men, yea, the best and bravest of men, were easily melted into tears; a thousand instances of which might be produced from profane as well as sacred writers. But now, notwithstanding the effeminacy which almost universally prevails, we leave those tears to women and children.

V. 38. *Sorrowing most, for that word which he spake, That they should see his face no more*—What sorrow will be in the great day when God shall speak that word, to all who are found on the left-hand, that they shall see his face no more!

V. 1. *And when we were torne away from them*—Not without doing violence both to ourselves and them.

V. 3. *We landed at Tyre*—That there should be Christians there was foretold, *Psalms* lxxxvii. 4. What we read in that *Psalms* of the *Philistines* and *Ethiopians* also may be compared with *Acts* viii. 40. xxvii. 4.

V. 4. *And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days*—In order to spend the sabbath with them. *Who told Paul by the Spirit*—That afflictions awaited him at *Jerusalem*. This was properly what they said by the Spirit. They themselves advised him, *Not to go up*. The disciples seemed to understand their prophetic impulse, to be an intimation from the Spirit, that Paul, if he were so minded, might avoid the danger, by not going to *Jerusalem*.

V. 7. *Having finished our voyage*—From *Macedonia*, (ch. xx. 6. *we came to Ptolemais*: A celebrated

our voyage, we came from Tyre to Ptolemais, and saluting the brethren,
 8 we abode with them one day. And the next day, we departed and came
 to Cesarea: and entering into the house of Philip the Evangelist, who
 9 was *one* of the seven, we abode with him. And he had four daughters,
 10 virgins, who were prophetesses. And as we tarried many days, a certain
 11 prophet named Agabus, came down from Judea. And coming to us,
 he took up Paul's girdle, and binding his own feet and hands, said,
 Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerufalem bind the
 man whose girdle this is, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.
 12 And when he heard these things, both we and they of the place, besought
 13 him, not to go up to Jerufalem. But Paul answered, What mean ye,
 weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound
 14 but also to die at Jerufalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when
 he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be
 done.
 15 And after these days, we took up our carriages, and went up to

A celebrated city on the sea-coast, antiently called *Accos*. It is now, like many other noble cities, only an heap of ruins.

V. 8. *We came to Cesarea*—So called from a stately temple, which *Herod the great* dedicated there to *Augustus Cesar*. It was the place where the Roman governor of *Judea* generally resided and kept his court. *Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven deacons*—An evangelist is, a preacher of the gospel to those who had never heard it, as *Philip* had done to the *Samaritans*, to the *Ethiopian Eunuch* and to all the towns from *Azotus* to *Cesarea*. (ch. viii. 5, 26, 40.) It is not unlikely he spent the following years, preaching in *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and the other Heathen cities, in the neighbourhood of *Galilee*, his house being at *Cesarea*, a convenient situation for that purpose. *We abode with him*—We lodged at his house, during our stay at *Cesarea*.

V. 10. *A certain prophet came*—The nearer the event was, the more express were the predictions which prepared *Paul* for it.

V. 11. *Binding his own feet and hands*—

In the manner that malefactors were wont to be bound when apprehended. *So shall the Jews bind the man, whose girdle this is*—*St. Paul's* bonds were first particularly foretold at *Cesarea*, to which he afterwards came in bonds, ch. xxiii. 33.

V. 12. *Both we* (his fellow-travellers) *and they of the place besought him, Not to go up to Jerufalem*—*St. Paul* knew that this prediction had the force of a command. They did not know this.

V. 13. *Breaking my heart*--For the apostles themselves were not void of human affections. *I am ready not only to be bound, but to die*—And to him that is ready for it, the burden is light.

V. 14. *And when he would not be persuaded*—This was not obstinacy, but true Christian resolution. We should never be persuaded, either to do evil, or to omit doing any good which is in our power; *saying, the will of the Lord be done*—Which they were satisfied, *Paul* knew.

V. 15. *We took up our carriages*—Or baggage; which probably went by sea before.

What

- 16 Jerusalem, And *some* of the disciples also from Cesarea went with us, and brought us to one Mnason, a Cyprian, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.
- 17 And when we were come up to Jerusalem, the brethren received us
18 gladly. And the next day, Paul went in with us to James, and all the
19 elders were present. And having saluted them, he gave them a particular
20 account of those things which God had done among the Gentiles by
his ministry. And having heard *it*, they glorified God, and said to him,
21 thou seest, brother, how many thousands of believing Jews there are,
and they are all zealous for the law. But they have been informed
concerning thee, that thou teachest the Jews who are among the Gentiles,
22 to apostatize from Moses, telling them, not to circumcise *their* children,
nor to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? The multitude
must needs come together; for they will hear that thou art come.
23 Therefore do this that we say to thee: there are with us four men, who
24 have a vow on them: Take them and purify thyself with them, and be at

What they took with them now in particular was, the alms they were carrying to *Jerusalem*, ch. xxiv. 17.

V. 16. *The disciples brought us to one Mnason, a Cyprian, an old disciple*—He was a native of Cyprus, but an inhabitant of *Jerusalem*, and probably one of the first converts there.

V. 18. *Paul went in with us*—That it might appear, we are all of one mind, to *James*—Commonly called the Lord's brother; the only apostle then presiding over the churches in *Judea*.

V. 20. *They are all zealous for the law*—For the whole *Mosaic* dispensation. How astonishing is this! Did none of the apostles, beside *St. Paul* know, that this dispensation was now abolished? And if they did both know and testify this, how came their bearers not to believe them?

V. 21. *They have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest the Jews—not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after the customs*—Of the *Mosaic* law. And so undoubtedly he did. And so he wrote to all the churches in *Galatia*, among whom were

many *Jews*. Yea, and *James* himself had long before assented to *Peter*, affirming before all the apostles and all the brethren, (ch. xv. 10.) That this very law was a yoke, *which* (said he) *neither our fathers nor we are able to bear*—Amazing! That they did not know this! Or, that if they did, they did not openly testify it at all hazards, to every *Jewish* convert in *Jerusalem*!

V. 22. *What is it therefore?*—What is to be done? *The multitude must needs come together*—They will certainly gather together, in a tumultuous manner, unless they be some way pacified.

V. 23. *Therefore*—To obviate their prejudice against thee: *Do this that we say to thee*—Doubtless they *meant* this advice *well*: but could *Paul* follow it in godly sincerity? Was not the yielding so far to the judgment of others, too great a deference to be paid to any mere men?

V. 24. *And all will know—that thou thyself walkest orderly, keeping the law*—Ought he not, without any reverence to man, where the truth of God was so deeply concerned, to have answered plainly, I do not keep
the

charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all will know, that there is nothing of those things which they have heard of thee; 25 but *that* thou thyself walkest orderly, keeping the law. As touching the Gentiles that believe, we have written and determined, that they should observe no such thing; save only that they keep themselves from what is offered to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, 26 and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, declaring the accomplishment of the days of purification, till the offering should be 27 offered for every one of them. And when the seven days were about to be accomplished, the Jews that were from Asia seeing him in the 28 temple, stirred up all the multitude, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help! This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: yea and hath even 29 brought Greeks into the temple, and polluted this holy place. For they had before seen Trophimus the Ephesian, with him in the city, whom 30 they supposed Paul had brought into the temple. And the whole city was moved, and the people ran together; and laying hold on Paul, the dragged him out of the temple: and immediately the gates were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, word came to the tribune of

the *Mosaic* law: neither need any of you. Yea, *Peter* doth not keep the law. And God himself expressly commanded him not to keep it; ordering him to *go in to men uncircumcised, and to eat with them.* (ch. xi. 3.) which the law utterly forbids.

V. 26. *Then Paul took the men*—Yielding his own judgment to their advice, which seemed to flow not out of spiritual, but carnal wisdom; *seeming* to be what he really was *not*: making *as if* he believed the law still in force. *Declaring*—Giving notice to the priests in waiting, that he designed to accomplish *the days of purification*, till all the sacrifices should be offered, as the *Mosaic* law required, (*Numb.* vi. 13.)

V. 27. *And when the seven days were about to be accomplished*—When after giving notice to the priests, they were entering upon

the accomplishment of those days. It was toward the beginning of them that *Paul* was seized. *The Jews that were from Asia*—Some of those *Jews* who came from *Asia* to the feast.

V. 28. *Against the people*—The *Jewish* nation; and *the law*—Of *Moses*; and *this place*—The temple. *Yea, and hath ever brought Greeks into the temple*—They might come into the outer court. But they imagined *Paul* had brought them into the inner temple, and had thereby polluted it.

V. 30. *And immediately the gates were shut*—Both to prevent any further violation of the temple; and to prevent *Paul's* taking sanctuary at the horns of the altar.

V. 31. *And as they went about to kill him*—It was a rule among the *Jews*, that any uncircumcised person who came into the
inner

32 the cohort, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them; and when they
 33 saw the tribune and soldiers, they ceased from beating Paul. Then the tribune came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains, and enquired, Who he was, and what he had done?
 34 But some among the multitude cried out one thing, some another; and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded
 35 him to be carried into the castle. But when he came upon the stairs, he was borne of the soldiers, through the violence of the multitude.
 36 For the throng of people followed after, crying, Away with him. And
 37 as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he said to the tribune,
 38 May I speak to thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian, who before these days madest an uproar, and leddest
 39 out four thousand murderers into the wilderness? But Paul said, I am a man who am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city:

inner temple, might be stoned without farther process. And they seemed to think, *Paul* who brought such in thither, deserved no better treatment. *Word came to the tribune*—A cohort or detachment of soldiers belonging to the *Roman* legion, which lodged in the adjacent castle of *Antonia*, were stationed on feast-days near the temple, to prevent disorders. It is evident *Lyfias* himself was not present, when the tumult began. Probably he was the oldest *Roman* tribune (or colonel) then at *Jerusalem*. And as such he was the commanding officer of the legion quartered at the castle.

V. 33. *Then the tribune*—Having made his way through the multitude, *came near and took him*—And how many great ends of Providence, were answered by this imprisonment? This was not only a means of preserving his life (after he had suffered severely for worldly prudence) but gave him an opportunity of preaching the gospel safely, in spite of all tumult; (ch. xxii. 22.) yea, and that in those places, to which otherwise he could have had no access,

(ver. 40.) *And commanded them to be bound with two chains*—Taking it for granted, he was some notorious offender. And thus the prophecy of *Agabus* was fulfilled, though by the hands of a *Roman*.

V. 35. *When he came upon the stairs*—The castle *Antonia* was situate on a rock fifty cubits high, at that corner of the outward temple, where the western and northern porticos joined, to each of which there were stairs descending from it.

V. 37. *As Paul was about to be brought into the castle*—The wisdom of God taught him, to make use of that very time and place.

V. 38. *Art thou that Egyptian*—Who came into *Judea*, when *Felix* had been some years governor there? Calling himself a prophet, he drew much people after him; and having brought them through the wilderness, led them to mount *Olivet*, promising that the walls of the city should fall down before them. But *Felix* marching out of *Jerusalem* against him, his followers quickly dispersed: many of whom were taken or slain: but he himself made his escape.

V. 40. *In*

40 and I beseech thee give me leave to speak to the people. And when he had given him leave, Paul standing on the stairs, waved *his* hand to the people: and a great silence being made, he spake to them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

XXII. Brethren, and fathers, hear ye now my defence unto you. (And
2 when they heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew tongue, they kept
3 the more silence: and he saith) I am verily a Jew, born at Tarsus in
Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, accurately in-
structed in the law of our fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye are
4 all this day. And I persecuted this way to the death, binding and delivering
5 into prisons both men and women: as likewise the high-priest is my
witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received
letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus; to bring them who were
6 there bound to Jerusalem to be punished. But as I journeyed and drew
near to Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great
7 light round about me. And I fell to the ground, and heard a voice

V. 40. *In the Hebrew tongue*---That dialect of it, which was then commonly spoken at *Jerusalem*.

V. 1. *Hear ye now my defence*---Which they could not hear before, for the tumult.

V. 3. *I am verily*---This defence answers all that is objected, ch. xxi. 28. As there, so here also mention is made of the person of *Paul*, ver. 3. of *the people and the law*, ver. 3, 5, 12; of *the temple*, ver. 17; of *teaching all men*, ver. 15---17, 21; and of the truth of his doctrine, ver. 6. But he speaks closely and nervously, in few words, because the time was short. *But brought up at the feet of Gamaliel*---The scholars usually sat on low seats, or upon mats on the floor, at the feet of their masters, whose seats were raised to a considerable height. *Accurately instructed*---The learned education which *Paul* had received, was once no doubt the matter of his boasting and confidence. Unsanctified learning *made his bonds strong*, and furnished him with numerous arguments against the gospel. Yet when the grace of God had changed his

heart, and turned his accomplishments into another channel, he was the fitter instrument to serve God's wise and merciful purposes, in the defence and propagation of Christianity.

V. 4. *And I persecuted this way*---With the same zeal that you do now---*Binding both men and women*---How much better was his condition, now he was bound himself?

V. 5. *The high-priest is my witness*---Is able to testify. *The brethren*---*Jews*: So this title was not peculiar to the Christians.

V. 6. *About noon*---All was done in the face of the sun. *A great light shone*---By whatever method God reveals himself to us, we shall have everlasting cause to recollect it with pleasure. Especially when he has gone in any remarkable manner out of his common way, for this gracious purpose. If so, we should often dwell on the particular circumstances, and be ready, on every proper occasion, to recount those wonders of power and love, for the encouragement and instruction of others.

V. 9. *They*

8 saying to me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered,
 Who art thou, Lord? And he said to me, I am Jesus of Nazareth,
 9 whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw the light,
 and were terrified; but they did not hear the voice of him that spake to
 10 me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me,
 Rise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things
 11 which are appointed thee to do. And as I could not see for the glory
 of that light, being led by the hand by them that were with me, I came
 12 into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law,
 13 well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt *there*, Coming to me, stood
 14 and said to me, Brother, Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I
 looked up upon him. And he said, the God of our fathers hath chosen
 thee, to know his will, and see that just one, and hear the voice of
 15 his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness to all men, of what thou hast
 16 seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized,
 17 and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And when I
 was returned to Jerusalem, and was praying in the temple, I was
 18 in a trance; And saw him saying to me, Make haste and depart
 quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony con-
 19 cerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned, and beat
 20 in every synagogue them that believed on thee. And when the blood

V. 9. *They did not hear the voice*---Distinctly; but only a confused noise.

V. 12. *A devout man according to the law* ---A truly religious person, and though a believer in *Christ*, yet a strict observer of the law of *Moses*.

V. 16. *Be baptized, and wash away thy sins* ---Baptism administered to real penitents, is both a means and seal of pardon. Nor did God ordinarily in the primitive church bestow this on any, unless through this means.

V. 17. *When I was returned to Jerusalem* ---From *Damascus*, and was *praying in the temple*---Whereby he shews that he still paid the temple its due honour, as the house of prayer. *I was in a trance*---Perhaps he might continue standing all the while, so that any who were near him, would hardly discern it.

V. 18. *And I saw him*—Jesus. *Saying to me, Depart quickly out of Jerusalem*—Because of the snares laid for thee; and in order to preach, where they will hear.

V. 19. *And I said*—It is not easy for a servant of *Christ*, who is himself deeply impressed with divine truths, to imagine to what a degree men are capable of hardening their hearts against them. He is often ready to think with *Paul*, It is impossible for any to resist such evidence. But experience makes him wiser, and shews that wilful unbelief is proof against all truth and reason.

V. 20. *When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by*—A real convert still retains the remembrance of his former sins. He confesses them, and is humbled for them, all the days of his life.

V. 22. *And*

of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting,
 21 and kept the garments of them that slew him. But he said to me,
 Depart : for I will send thee far off to the Gentiles.

22 And they heard him to this word, and *then* lifted up their voice and said,
 Away with such a fellow from the earth ; for it is not fit that he should
 23 live. And as they cried out, and rent their garments, and cast dust into
 24 the air, The tribune commanded him to be brought into the castle, and
 ordered him to be examined by scourging, that he might know for what
 25 cause they cried so against him. And as they were binding him with
 thongs, Paul said to the Centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to
 26 scourge a Roman even uncondemned ? The Centurion hearing *it*, went
 and told the tribune, saying, Consider what thou art about to do ; for
 27 this man is a Roman. Then the tribune came and said to him, Tell me,
 28 art thou a Roman ? He said, Yea. And the tribune answered, I purchased
 this freedom with a great sum of money. And Paul said, But I was
 29 *free-born*. Then they who were going to examine him, immediately
 departed from him : and the tribune was afraid, after he knew he was a
 Roman, because he had bound him.

30 And on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty, what he was accused
 of by the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bonds, and commanded the chief

V. 22. *And they heard him to this word—*Till he began to speak of his mission to the *Gentiles*, and this too in such a manner as implied that the *Jews* were in danger of being cast off.

V. 23. *They rent their garments—*In token of indignation and horror at this pretended blasphemy, *and cast dust into the air—*Through vehemence of rage, which they knew not how to vent.

V. 25. *And as they—*The foldiers ordered by the tribune, *were binding him with thongs—*A freeman of *Rome* might be bound with a chain and beaten with a staff : but he might not be bound with thongs, neither scourged, or beaten with rods ; *Paul said to the centurion—*The captain who stood by to see the orders of the tribune executed.

V. 26. *Consider what thou art about to do ;*

*for this man is a Roman—*Yea, there was a stronger reason to consider. For this man was a servant of God.

V. 28. *But I was free born—*Not barely as being born at *Tarsus* ; for this was not a *Roman* colony. But probably either his father, or some of his ancestors had been made free of *Rome* for some military service.

We learn hence, that we are under no obligation as Christians, to give up our civil privileges (which we are to receive and prize as the gift of God) to every insolent invader. In a thousand circumstances, gratitude to God, and duty to men, will oblige us to insist upon them ; and engage us to strive to transmit them improved, rather than impaired, to posterity.

priests and all the council to come; and bringing Paul down, set him before them.

XXIII. And Paul earnestly beholding the council, said, Brethren, I have
 2 lived in all good conscience before God till this day. And Ananias the
 high-priest commanded them that stood by, to smite him on the mouth.
 3 Then said Paul to him, God is about to smite thee, thou whited wall.
 For fittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me
 4 to be smitten contrary to the law? But they that stood by, said, Revilest
 5 thou God's high-priest? Then said Paul, I was not aware, brethren, that
 it was the high-priest; for it is written, * Thou shalt not revile the ruler
 6 of thy people. But Paul perceiving that the one part were Sadducees,
 and the other Pharisees, cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a
 Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; for the hope of the resurrection of the
 7 dead am I called in question. And when he had said this, there arose

V. 1. *And Paul earnestly beholding the council*—Professing a clear conscience by his very countenance; and likewise waiting to see, whether any of them was minded to ask him any question, *said, I have lived in all good conscience before God till this day*—He speaks chiefly of the time since he became a Christian. For none questioned him concerning what had been before. And yet even in his unconverted state, although he was in error, yet he had acted from conscience, *Before God*—Whatever men may think or say of me.

V. 3. *Then said Paul*—Being carried away by a sudden and prophetic impulse, *God is about to smite thee, thou whited wall*—Fair without; full of dirt and rubbish within. And he might well be so termed, not only as he committed this outrage, while gravely sitting on the tribunal of justice; but also as, at the same time that he stood high in the esteem of the citizens, he cruelly defrauded the priests of their legal subsistence, so that some of them even perished for want. And God did remarkably *smite* him; for about five years after this, his

house being reduced to ashes, in a tumult begun by his own son, he was besieged in the royal palace; where having hid himself in an old aqueduct, he was dragged out and miserably slain.

V. 5. *I was not aware, Brethren, that it was the high-priest*—He seems to mean, I did not advert to it, in the prophetic transport of my mind: but he does not add, That his not adverting to it proceeded from the power of the spirit coming upon him; as knowing they were not able to bear it. This answer admirably shews the situation of mind he was then in, partly with regard to the by-standers, whom he thus softens, adding also the title of *brethren*, and justifying their reproof by the prohibition of *Moses*; partly with regard to himself, who, after that singular transport subsided, was again under the direction of the general command.

V. 6. *I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: for the hope of the resurrection of the dead, am I called in question*—So he was in effect; although not formally, or explicitly.

V. 8. *The*

* Exod. xxii. 28.

a contention between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the multitude
 8 was divided. For the Sadducees say, there is no resurrection, neither
 9 angel nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. And there was a great
 clamour: and the Scribes of the Pharisees side arising, contended, saying,
 We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to
 10 him, let us not fight against God. And as a great disturbance arose, the
 tribune fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded
 the soldiers to go down, and pluck him from among them, and bring him
 into the castle.

11 And the night following, the Lord standing by him, said, Be of
 good courage, Paul: for as thou hast testified the things concerning
 12 me at Jerusalem, so thou must testify at Rome also. And when it was
 day, some of the Jews entering into a conspiracy, bound themselves by a
 curse, saying, that they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed
 13 Paul. And they were more than forty, who had made this confederacy.
 14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound
 ourselves by a solemn curse, not to taste any thing, till we have killed
 15 Paul. Now therefore ye with the council signify to the tribune, that he

V. 8. *The Pharisees confess both*—Both the resurrection, and the existence of angels and separate spirits.

V. 9. *And the Scribes of the Pharisees side arising*—Every sect contains both learned and unlearned. The former use to be the mouth of the party. *If a spirit*—St. Paul in his speech from the stairs had affirmed, that Jesus, whom they knew to have been dead, was alive, and that he had *spoken to him* from heaven, and again in a vision. So they add nothing, only they construe it in their own way, putting *an angel or spirit* for Jesus.

V. 11. *And the night following, the Lord Jesus*—What Paul had before purposed in spirit, (ch. xix. 21.) God now in due time confirms. Another declaration to the same effect is made by an angel of God, (ch. xxvii. 23.) And from the 23d chapter the sum of this book turns on the testimony of Paul to the Romans. How would the defenders of St. Peter's supremacy triumph,

could they find but half as much ascribed to him? *Be of good courage, Paul*—As he laboured under singular distresses and persecutions, so he was favoured with extraordinary assurances of the divine assistance. *Thou must testify*—Particular promises are usually given, when all things appear desperate. *At Rome also*—Danger is nothing in the eyes of God: all hinderances further his work. A promise of what is afar off, implies all that necessarily lies between. *Paul shall testify at Rome*: therefore he shall come to Rome; therefore he shall escape the Jews, the sea, the viper.

V. 12. *Some of the Jews bound themselves*—Such execrable vows were not uncommon among the Jews. And if they were prevented from accomplishing what they had vowed, it was an easy matter to obtain absolution from the Rabbi's.

V. 15. *Now therefore ye*—Which they never scrupled at all, as not doubting, but they were doing God service.

V. 17. *And*

bring him down to you to-morrow, as though ye would more accurately know the things concerning him: and we, before he come near, are
 16 ready to kill him. But Paul's filser's son, hearing of their lying in wait,
 17 came, and entering into the castle, told Paul. And Paul calling to him
 one of the centurions, said, Conduct this young man to the tribune;
 18 for he hath something to tell him. So he took and brought him to the
 tribune, and said, Paul the prisoner, calling me to him, desired me, to
 19 bring this young man to thee, who hath something to tell thee. And the
 20 tribune taking him by the hand, and going aside privately, asked, What
 is it that thou hast to tell me? And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask
 thee to bring down Paul to-morrow, to the council, as if they would
 21 enquire something concerning him more accurately. But do not yield
 to them; for there are more than forty of them lie in wait, who have
 bound themselves with a curse, neither to eat nor drink till they have
 killed him; and now are they ready, expecting a promise from thee.
 22 So the tribune dismissed the young man, having charged *him*, Tell no
 23 man, that thou hast discovered these things to me. And having called
 to him two of the centurions, he said, Prepare two hundred soldiers to
 go to Cefarea, and seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, by the
 24 third hour of the night. And provide beasts, to set Paul upon, and
 25 conduct *him* safe to Felix the governor. And he wrote a letter after this
 manner, Claudius Lyfias to the most excellent governor Felix, greeting.
 26 As this man was seized by the Jews, and about to be killed by them,
 27 I came with the soldiery and rescued him, having learned, that he was a
 28 Roman. And desiring to know the crime of which they accused him,
 29 I brought him before their council: Whom I found to be accused con-
 cerning questions of their law, but to be charged with nothing worthy of
 30 death or of bonds. And when it was shewn me, that an ambush was
 about to be laid for the man by the Jews, I immediately sent *him* to

V. 17. *And Paul*—Though he had an express promise of it from Christ, was not to neglect any proper means of safety.

V. 19. *And the tribune taking him by the hand*—In a mild, condescending way. *Lyfias* seems to have conducted this whole affair with great integrity, humanity, and prudence.

V. 24. *Provide beasts*—If a change should be necessary, to set Paul on—So we read of his riding once; but not by choice.

V. 27. *Having learned, that he was a Roman*—True; but not before he rescued him. Here he uses art.

V. 31. *The*

thee, commanding his accusers also to say before thee what they have against him. Farewel.

31 The soldiers therefore taking Paul, as it was commanded them;
32 brought *him* by night to Antipatris. On the morrow they returned to
33 the castle, leaving the horsemen to go with him: Who entering into
Cesarea, and delivering the letter to the governor, presented Paul also
34 before him. And having read *it*, he asked of what province he was?
35 And being informed that he was of Cilicia, I will give thee, said he, a
thorough hearing, when thy accusers also are come. And he com-
manded him to be kept in Herod's palace.

XXIV. And after five days, Ananias the high-priest came down with the
elders, and a certain orator, *named* Tertullus; who appeared before the
2 governor against Paul. And he being called, Tertullus began to accuse
him, saying, Seeing we enjoy great peace through thee, and that very
worthy deeds are done to this nation by thy prudence always, and in all
3 places, We accept *it*, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But
4 that I may not trouble thee farther, I beseech thee of thy clemency to
5 hear us a few words. For we have found this man, a pestilent fellow,
and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a
6 ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: Who hath also attempted to
profane the temple; whom we seized and would have judged according
7 to our law. But Lysias the tribune coming upon us, with great violence
8 took him away out of our hands, Commanding his accusers to come to

V. 31. *The soldiers brought him by night to Antipatris*—But not the same night they set out. For *Antipatris* was about thirty-eight of our miles north-west of *Jerusalem*. *Herod the Great* rebuilt it, and gave it this name, in honour of his father *Antipater*. *Cesarea* was near seventy miles from *Jerusalem*; about thirty from *Antipatris*.

V. 35. *In Herod's palace*—This was a palace and a court, built by *Herod the Great*. Probably some tower belonging to it might be used for a kind of a state-prison.

V. 1. *Ananias*—Who would spare no trouble on the occasion, *with several of the elders*, members of the Sanhedrim.

V. 2. *Tertullus began*—A speech how different from *St. Paul's*! which is true, modest, solid, and without paint. *Felix* was a man of the most infamous character, and a plague to all the provinces over which he presided.

V. 4. *But that I may not trouble thee any farther*—By trespassing either on thy patience or modesty. The eloquence of *Tertullus* was as bad as his cause: a lame introduction, a lame transition, and a lame conclusion! Did not God confound the orator's language?

V. 10. *Knowing*

thee, whereby thou mayest thyself, on examination, take knowledge of all
9 these things, of which we accuse him. And the Jews also assented,
saying that these things were so.

10 Then Paul, after the governor had made a sign to him to speak, answered,
Knowing thou hast been for several years a judge to this nation, I
11 cheerfully answer for myself: As thou mayest know, that it is but twelve
12 days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem. And they neither found
me disputing with any man in the temple, nor making an insurrection
13 among the multitude, either in the synagogues, or in the city. Nor
14 can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I con-
fess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the
God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and
15 in the prophets; Having hope in God, that there shall be a resurrection
of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, which they themselves

V. 10. *Knowing for several years thou hast been a judge over this nation*—And so not unacquainted with our religious rites and customs, and consequently more capable of understanding and deciding a cause of this nature. There was no flattery in this. It was a plain fact. He governed Judea six or seven years. *I answer for myself*—And it may be observed, his answer exactly corresponds with the three articles of *Tertullus'* charge, Sedition, heresy, profanation of the temple. As to the first, he suggests, that he had not been long enough at *Jerusalem* to form a party and attempt an insurrection: (For it was but twelve days since he came up thither; five of which he had been at *Cesarea*, ver. 1: one or two were spent in his journey thither, and most of the rest he had been confined at *Jerusalem*.) And he challenges them, in fact to produce any evidence of such practices. (ver. 11—13.) As to the second he confesses himself to be a Christian; but maintains this to be a religion, perfectly agreeable to the law and the prophets, and therefore deserving a fair reception. (ver. 14—16.) And as for profaning the temple, he

observes that he behaved there in a most peaceful and regular manner, so that his innocence had been manifest even before the Sanhedrim, where the authors of the tumult did not dare to appear against him.

V. 14. *After the way which they call heresy*—This appellation St. Paul corrects. Not that it was then an odious word; but it was not honourable enough. A party or sect (so that word signifies) is formed by men: *This way* was prescribed by God. The apostle had now said what was sufficient for his defence: but having a fair occasion, he makes an ingenuous confession of his faith in this verse, his hope in the next, his love in the 17th. *So worship I the God of my fathers*—This was a very proper plea before a Roman magistrate: as it proved that he was under the protection of the Roman laws, since the Jews were so: whereas had he introduced the worship of new Gods, he would have forfeited that protection. *Believing all things which are written*—Concerning the *Messiah*.

V. 15. *Both of the just and the unjust*—In a public court, this was peculiarly proper to be observed.

V. 16. *For*

16 also expect. And for this cause do I also exercise myself to have always
 17 a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Now after
 18 several years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. Where-
 upon certain Jews from Asia found me purifying in the temple, neither
 19 with multitude, nor with tumult: Who ought to have been present
 20 before thee, and to accuse *me*, if they had any thing against me. Or let
 these themselves say, what crime they found in me, when I stood before
 21 the council, Unless *it be* concerning this one word, that I cried, standing
 among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead, * I am called in
 question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, he put them off, saying, After
 I have been more accurately informed concerning this way, when
 Lyfias the tribune cometh down, I will take full cognisance of your
 23 affair. And he commanded the centurion to keep him, and let *him*
 have liberty and to hinder none of his friends from ministering to
 him.

24 And after some days, Felix coming with Drufilla his wife, who was a
 Jewess, sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.
 25 And as he reasoned concerning justice, temperance, and the judgment to
 come, Felix being terrified, answered, Go thy way for this time: when I

V. 16. *For this cause*—With a view to this, *I also exercise myself*—As well as they.

V. 19. *Who ought to have been present before thee*—But the world never commits greater blunders, even against its own laws, than when it is persecuting the children of God.

V. 21. *Unless they think me blameable for this one word*—Which nevertheless was the real truth.

V. 22. *After I have been more accurately informed*—Which he afterwards was: and he doubtless (as well as *Festus* and *Agrippa*) transmitted a full account of these things to Rome.

V. 23. *He commanded the centurion to let him have liberty*—To be only a prisoner at large. Hereby the gospel was spread more and more: not to the satisfaction of the *Jews*. But they could not hinder it.

V. 24. *And after Paul had been kept some days in this gentle confinement at Cesarea, Felix, who had been absent for a short time, coming thither again, with Drufilla his wife*—The daughter of *Herod Agrippa*, one of the finest women of that age. *Felix* persuaded her to forsake her husband, *Azzius*, king of *Emessa*, and to be married to himself, though a heathen. She was afterwards, with a son she had by *Felix*, consumed in an eruption of mount *Vesuvius*. *Concerning the faith in Christ*—That is, the doctrine of *Christ*.

V. 25. *And as he reasoned of justice, temperance, and the judgment to come*—This was the only effectual way of preaching *Christ* to an unjust, lewd judge. *Felix being terrified*—How happily might this conviction have ended, had he been careful to pursue the views, which were then

* Chap. xxiii. 6.

opening

26 have a convenient season, I will afterwards call for thee. And he hoped also that money would have been given him by Paul; and therefore he
 27 sent for him the oftner, and discoursed with him. But after two years Felix was succeeded by Portius Festus: and Felix desiring to gratify the Jews, left Paul bound.

XXV. Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days
 2 he went up from Cesarea to Jerusalem. Then the high-priest and the chief of the Jews, appeared before him against Paul, and besought him,
 3 Begging favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem,
 4 lying in wait to kill him by the way. But Festus answered, That Paul was kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart *thither* shortly.
 5 Therefore let those of you, said he, who are able, go down with me and

opening upon his mind! But, like thousands, he deferred the consideration of these things to a *more convenient season*. A season which, alas! never came. For though he heard again, he was terrified no more.

In the mean time we do not find *Drusilla*, though a Jewess, was thus alarmed. She had been used to hear of a future judgment: perhaps too she trusted to the being a daughter of *Abraham*, or to the expiation of the law, and so was proof against the convictions which seized on her husband, though an Heathen. Let this teach us to guard against all such false dependencies, as tend to elude those convictions, that might otherwise be produced in us, by the faithful preaching of the word of God. Let us stop our ears against those messengers of Satan, who appear as angels of light, who would teach us to reconcile the hope of salvation with a corrupt heart or an unholy life. *Go thy way for this time*—O how will every damned soul one day lament his having neglected such a time as this?

V. 26. *He hoped also*—An evil hope: so when he heard, his eye was not single. No marvel then that he profited nothing by all *St. Paul's* discourses: *that money would be given*—By the Christians for the liberty of

so able a minister. And waiting for this, unhappy *Felix* fell short of the treasure of the gospel.

V. 27. *But after two years*—After *St. Paul* had been two years a prisoner, *Felix desiring to gratify the Jews, left Paul bound*—Thus men of the world, to gratify one another, stretch forth their hands to the things of God! Yet the wisdom of *Felix* did not profit him, did not satisfy the Jews at all. Their accusations followed him to *Rome*, and had utterly ruined him, but for the interest which his brother *Pallas* had with *Nero*.

V. 2. *Then the high-priest and the chief of the Jews appeared against Paul*—In so long a time their rage was nothing cooled. So much louder a call had *Paul* to the *Gentiles*.

V. 4. *But Festus answered*—So *Festus'* care to preserve the imperial privileges, was the means of preserving *Paul's* life. By what invisible springs does God govern the world! With what silence, and yet with what wisdom and energy!

V. 5. *Let those of you who are able*—Who are best able to undertake the journey, and to manage the cause. *If there be any wickedness in him*—So he does not pass sentence, before he hears the cause.

V. 6. *Not*

6 accuse the man, if there be any *wickedness* in him. And having tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Cæsarea ; and the next day, sitting on the judgment-seat, he commanded Paul to
7 be brought. And when he was come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem, stood round about *him*, bringing many and heavy
8 accusations against Paul, which they were not able to prove : while he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the
9 temple, nor against Cæsar, have I offended at all. But Festus, desiring to gratify the Jews, answered Paul and said, Art thou willing to go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged before me concerning these things ?
10 Then said Paul, I am standing at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged : I have done no wrong to the Jews, as thou also very
11 well knowest. For if indeed I have done wrong, and have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die : but if there is nothing of the things whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up to them.
12 I appeal to Cæsar. Then Festus, having conferred with the council answered, Hast thou appealed to Cæsar ? To Cæsar shalt thou go.
13 And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came to Cæsarea,
14 to salute Festus. And when they had been there many days, Festus declared the case of Paul to the king, saying, There is a certain man
15 left prisoner by Felix, About whom when I was at Jerusalem, the chief

V. 6. *Not more than ten days*—A short space for a new governor to stay at such a city as *Jerusalem*. He could not with any convenience have heard and decided the cause of *Paul* within that time.

V. 7. *Bringing many accusations*—When many accusations are heaped together, frequently not one of them is true.

V. 8. *While he answered*—To a general charge, a general answer was sufficient.

V. 9. *Art thou willing to go up to Jerusalem*—*Festus* could have ordered this, without asking *Paul*. But God secretly overruled the whole, that he might have an occasion of appealing to *Rome*.

V. 11. *I am standing at Cæsar's judgment-seat*—For all the courts of the *Roman* governors, were held in the name of the emperor and by commission from him.

No man can give me up—He expresses it modestly : the meaning is, thou canst not. *I appeal to Cæsar*—Which any *Roman* citizen might do, before sentence was passed.

V. 12. *The council*—It was customary for a considerable number of persons of distinction, to attend the *Roman* governors. These constituted a kind of council, with whom they frequently advised.

V. 13. *Agrippa*—The son of *Herod Agrippa* (ch. xii. 1.) and *Bernice*—His sister, with whom he lived in a scandalous familiarity. This was the person whom *Titus Vespasian* so passionately loved, that he would have made her empress, had not the clamours of the *Romans* prevented it.

V. 15. *Desiring judgment against him*—As upon a previous conviction, which they falsely pretended.

priests and elders of the Jews appeared before *me*, desiring judgment
 16 against him. To whom I answered, It is not the custom of the Romans,
 to give up any man, till he that is accused have the accusers face to face,
 and have liberty to make his defence, touching the crime laid to his
 17 charge. When therefore they were come hither, I without any delay
 sat on the judgment-seat the next day, and commanded the man to be
 18 brought forth. Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought
 19 no accusation of such things as I supposed; But had certain questions
 against him, relating to their own religious worship, and about one Jesus,
 20 that was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And as I doubted of
 such manner of questions, I asked, If he would go to Jerusalem, and
 21 there be judged concerning these matters? But Paul appealing to
 be kept for the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I
 22 could send him to Cæsar. Then Agrippa said to Festus, I would also
 hear the man myself. And he said, To-morrow thou shalt hear him.
 23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come and Bernice with great
 pomp, and were entered into the place of audience, with the tribunes
 and principal men of the city, at the command of Festus, Paul was
 24 brought forth. And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all ye who are
 present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the
 Jews have pleaded with me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out,
 25 that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found, that he had
 committed nothing worthy of death, and he had himself appealed to
 26 the emperor, I determined to send him: Of whom I have nothing certain
 to write to *my lord*: wherefore I have brought him before you, and

V. 16. *It is not the custom of the Romans*—How excellent a rule, to condemn no one unheard! A rule, which as it is common to all nations, (courts of inquisition only excepted) so it ought to direct our proceedings in all affairs, not only in public but private life.

V. 18. *Such things as I supposed*—From their passion and vehemence.

V. 19. *But had certain questions*—How coldly does he mention the things of the last importance! *And about one Jesus*—Thus does *Festus* speak of him, to whom every

knee shall bow! *Whom Paul affirmed to be alive*—And was this a doubtful question? But why, O *Festus*, didst thou doubt concerning it? Only because thou didst not search into the evidence of it. Otherwise that evidence might have opened to thee, till it had grown up into full conviction: and thy illustrious prisoner have led thee into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

V. 23. *With the tribunes and principal men of the city*—The chief officers both military and civil.

V. 1. *And*

especially before thee, O king Agrippa, that after examination taken, 27 I may have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable, to send a prisoner, and not to signify also the crimes *alledged* against him.

XXVI. Then Agrippa said to Paul, It is permitted thee to speak for 2 thyself. And Paul, stretching forth his hand made his defence. I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am this day to make my defence before thee, concerning all those things whereof I am accused by the 3 Jews, Who art accurately acquainted with all the customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4 The manner of my life from my youth which was from the beginning 5 among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know, Who knew me 6 from the first, (if they would testify) that I lived a Pharisee, after the strictest sect of our religion. And now I stand in judgment, for the hope

V. 1. *And Paul stretching forth his hand*—Chained as it was: a decent expression of his own earnestness, and proper to engage the attention of his hearers: *answered for himself*—Not only refuting the accusations of the Jews, but enlarging upon the faith of the gospel.

V. 2. *King Agrippa*—There is a peculiar force in thus addressing a person by name. *Agrippa* felt this.

V. 3. *Who art accurately acquainted*—Which *Festus* was not; *with the customs*—In practical matters; *and questions*—In speculative. This word *Festus* had used in the absence of *Paul*, (ch. xxv. 19.) who by the divine leading, repeats and explains it. *Agrippa* had had peculiar advantages, for an accurate knowledge of the Jewish customs and questions, from his education under his father *Herod*, and his long abode at *Jerusalem*.

Nothing can be imagined more suitable or more graceful, than this whole discourse of *Paul* before *Agrippa*; in which the seriousness of the Christian, the boldness of

the apostle, and the politeness of the gentleman and the scholar, appear in a most beautiful contrast, or rather a most happy union.

V. 4. *From my youth, which was from the beginning*—That is, which was from the beginning of my youth.

V. 5. *If they would testify*—But they would not; for they well knew what weight his former life must add to his present testimony.

V. 6. *And now*—This and the two following verses are in a kind of parenthesis, and shew that what the Pharisees rightly taught concerning the resurrection, *Paul* likewise asserted at this day. The 9th verse is connected with the 5th. For pharisaism impelled him to persecute. *I stand in judgment for the hope of the promise*—Of the resurrection. So it was in effect. For unless *Christ* had risen, there could have been no resurrection of the dead. And it was chiefly for testifying the resurrection of *Christ*, that the Jews still persecuted him.

7 of the promise made by God to our fathers: To which our twelve
 8 tribes, worshipping continually night and day, hope to attain: con-
 9 cerning which hope, king Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. What?
 10 Is it judged by you an incredible thing, that God should raise the dead?
 11 I indeed thought myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the
 12 name of Jesus of Nazareth: Which also I did in Jerusalem; and having
 13 received authority from the chief priests, I shut up many of the saints in
 14 prisons, and when they were killed, I gave my vote against *them*. And
 15 frequently punishing them in all the synagogues, I compelled *them* to
 16 blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them*
 even to foreign cities. * Whereupon as I was going to Damascus, with
 authority and commission from the chief priests, At mid-day, O king,
 I saw in the way, a light from heaven, above the brightness of the
 sun, shining round me and them that journeyed with me. And when
 we were all fallen down to the earth, I heard a voice saying to me in the
 Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *It is hard for*
 thee to kick against the goads. And I said, Who art thou Lord? And
 he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy
 feet; for I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to ordain thee a

V. 7. *Our twelve tribes*—For a great part of the ten tribes also had at various times returned from the east to their own country, (James i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 1.) *Worshipping continually night and day*—That is, this is what they aim at in all their public and private worship.

V. 8. *Is it judged by you an incredible thing*—It was by *Festus*, (ch. xxv. 19.) to whom *Paul* answers, as if he had heard him discourse.

V. 9. *I thought*—When I was a Pharisee; *that I ought to do many things*—Which he now enumerates.

V. 10. *I shut up many of the saints*—Men not only innocent, but good, just, holy. *I gave my vote against them*—That is, I joined with those who condemned them. Perhaps the chief priests did also give him power to vote on these occasions.

V. 11. *I compelled them*—That is, some of them; *to blaspheme*—This is the most dreadful of all! Repent, ye enemies of the gospel. If *Spira*, who was compelled, suffered so terribly, what will become of those who compel, like *Saul*, but do not repent like him?

V. 13. *O king*—Most seasonably in the height of the narration, does he thus fix the king's attention. *Above the brightness of the sun*—And no marvel. For what is the brightness of this created sun, to the sun of righteousness, *the brightness of the father's glory*?

V. 14. *In the Hebrew tongue*—*St. Paul* was not now speaking in *Hebrew*: when he was, ch. xxiii. 7. he did not add, *In the Hebrew tongue*. *Christ* used this tongue both on earth and from heaven.

V. 17. *Delivering*

* Acts ix. 2.

minister and a witness, both of the things which thou hast seen, and of
 17 those in which I will appear to thee. Delivering thee from the people,
 18 and the Gentiles, to whom I now send thee, To open their eyes, that
 they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to
 God; that they may receive through faith which is in me, forgiveness
 19 of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified. From that
 time, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.
 20 But first to them at Damascus and at Jerusalem, and through all the
 country of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles I declared, that they should
 21 repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. For
 these things the Jews seizing me in the temple, attempted to kill me with
 22 their own hands. But having obtained help from God, I continue
 till this day, testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but
 23 what both the prophets and Moses have declared should be, That
 Christ having suffered, and being the first who rose from the dead,
 24 should shew light to the people and to the Gentiles. And as he was.

V. 17. *Delivering thee from the people—*
 The *Jews and the Gentiles, to whom, both*
*Jews and Gentiles, I now send thee—*Paul gives
 them to know, that the liberty he enjoys
 even in bonds, was promised to him, as
 well as his preaching to the *Gentiles*. *I,*
 denotes the authority of the *sender*. *Now,*
 the time whence his mission was dated. For
 his apostleship, as well as his conversion,
 commenced at this moment.

V. 18. *To open—*He opens them, who
 sends *Paul*; and he does it, by *Paul* who is
 sent: *Their eyes—*Both of the *Jews* and
*Gentiles: that they may turn—*Through the
 power of the almighty, *from* the spiritual
darkness wherein they are involved, *to the*
light of divine knowledge and holiness, *and*
from the power of Satan, who now holds them
 in sin, guilt, and misery, *to* the love and
 happy service of God: *that they may receive*
through faith (He seems to place the same
 blessings in a fuller light) pardon, holiness,
 and glory.

V. 19. *From that time—*Having received
 power to obey. *I was not disobedient—*
 I did obey, I used that power. (*Gal. i. 16.*)

So that even this grace whereby St. *Paul* was
 influenced, was not irresistible.

V. 20. *I declared—*From that hour to
 this, both to *Jew* and *Gentile, that they should*
*repent—*This repentance, we may observe,
 is previous both to inward and outward
 holiness.

V. 21. *For these things—*The apostle now
 applies all that he had said.

V. 22. *Having obtained help from God—*
 When all other help failed, God sent the
Romans from the castle, and so fulfilled the
 promise he had made, ver. 17.

V. 24. *Festus said, Paul, thou art beside*
*thyself—*To talk of men's rising from the
 dead! And of a Jew's enlightening not
 only his own nation, but the polite and
 learned *Greeks* and *Romans*! Nay, *Festus*, it
 is thou that *art beside thyself*: that striketh
 quite wide of the mark. And no wonder:
 he saw that nature did not act in *Paul*;
 but the grace that acted in him he did not
 see. And therefore he took all this ardor
 which animated the apostle, for a mere start
 of learned frenzy.

V. 25. *I am*

thus making his defence, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art
 25 beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am
 not mad, most excellent Festus, but utter the words of truth and sobriety.
 26 For the king knoweth of these things; to whom also I speak with
 freedom; for I am persuaded none of these things are hidden from him;
 27 for this was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, Believest thou the
 28 prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul,
 29 Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would
 to God, that not only thou, but likewise all that hear me, were this day
 both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.
 30 And as he said this, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice,
 31 and they that sat with them. And as they were going away, they spake
 one to another, saying, This man doth nothing worthy of death, or of

V. 25. *I am not mad, most excellent Festus*—The title properly belonging to a *Roman propretor*. How inexpressibly beautiful is this reply? How strong! yet how decent and respectful? Madmen seldom call men by their names, and titles of honour. Thus also St. Paul refutes the charge. *But utter the words of truth* (confirmed in the next verse) *and sobriety*, the very reverse of madness. And both these remain, even when the men of God act with the utmost vehemence.

V. 26. *For the king knoweth of these things*—St. Paul having refuted Festus pursues his purpose, returning naturally, and as it were step by step, from Festus to Agrippa. *To whom I speak with freedom*—This freedom was probably one circumstance which Festus accounted madness.

V. 27. *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?*—He that believes these, believes Paul, yea, and Christ. The apostle now comes close to his heart. What did Agrippa feel, when he heard this? *I know that thou believest*—Here Paul lays so fast hold on the king, that he can scarce make any resistance.

V. 28. *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!*—

See here, Festus altogether an Heathen, Paul altogether a Christian, Agrippa halting between both. Poor Agrippa! But almost persuaded? So near the mark, and yet fall short! Another step, and thou art within the veil. Reader, stop not with Agrippa; but go on with Paul.

V. 29. *I would to God*—Agrippa had spoke of being a Christian, as a thing wholly in his own power. Paul gently corrects this mistake; intimating, it is the gift and the work of God; *that all that hear me*—It was modesty in St. Paul, not to apply directly to them all; yet he looks upon them and observes them; *were such as I am*—Christians indeed; full of *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. He speaks from a full sense of his own happiness, and an overflowing love to all.

V. 30. *And as he said this, the king rose up*—An unspeakably precious moment to Agrippa. Whether he duly improved it or no, we shall see in that day.

V. 31. *This man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds*—They speak of his whole life, not of one action only. And could ye learn nothing more than this, from that discourse? A favourable judgment of such a Preacher, is not all that God requires.

V. 1. *When*

2 bonds. And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

XVII. And when it was determined, to sail into Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other prisoners, to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan cohort. And going aboard a ship of Adramyttium, that was to sail by the coasts of Asia, we set sail, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we reached Sidon. And Julius treating Paul courteously, permitted *him* to go to *his* friends, to take refreshment. And setting sail from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And having sailed through the sea of Cilicia, and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And the centurion finding a ship of Alexandria there, bound for Italy, put us on board of it. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were scarce come over-against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over-against Salmone. And passing it with difficulty, we came to a certain place called the Fair Havens, near which was the city Lasea. And as much time was spent, and sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was already past, Paul exhorted *them*, Saying to them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with injury and much damage, not only to the lading and the ship, but also to our lives. But the centurion regarded the master and the owner of the vessel,

V. 1. When it was determined to sail—being a shorter and less expensive passage to Rome.

V. 2. Adramyttium was a sea-port of Mysia. Aristarchus and Luke went with Paul by Myra, not being ashamed of his bonds.

V. 3. Julius treating Paul courteously—perhaps he had heard him make his defence.

V. 4. We sailed under Cyprus—Leaving it to the left-hand.

V. 7. Cnidus was a cape and city of Caria.

V. 8. The Fair Havens still retain the name. But the city of Lasea is now utterly ruined together with many more of the hundred cities for which Crete was once so famous.

V. 9. The fast, or day of atonement,

was kept on the tenth of Tisri, that is the 25th of September. This was to them an ill time of sailing; not only because winter was approaching, but also because of the sudden storms, which are still common in the Mediterranean, at that time of the year. Paul exhorted *them*—Not to leave Crete. Even in external things, faith exerts itself with the greatest presence of mind, and readiness of advice.

V. 10. Saying to *them*—To the centurion and other officers.

V. 11. The centurion regarded the master—And indeed it is a general rule, believe an artificer in his own art. Yet when there is the greatest need, a real Christian will often advise even better than him.

V. 12. Which

- 12 more than the things, which was spoken by Paul. And as the haven was not convenient to winter in, the greater part advised to set sail from thence also, if by any means they might reach Phenice, to winter *there*, which is an haven of Crete, looking to the South-west and North-west.
- 13 And as the South wind blew gently, supposing they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor, and sailed on close by Crete.
- 14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind named
- 15 Euroclydon. And the ship being caught, and not able to bear up against
- 16 the wind, we let *her* drive. And running under a certain island called
- 17 Claudia, we were hardly able to get masters of the boat: Which having taken up, they used helps, under-girding the ship, and fearing lest they should fall into the quick-sands, they struck sail, and so were driven.
- 18 And as we were in an exceeding great storm, the next day they
- 19 lightened the ship. And the third day we cast out with our own hands
- 20 the tackling of the ship. And as neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was now taken away.
- 21 But after long abstinence, Paul standing in the midst of them, said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened to me, and not have loosed from Crete,
- 22 and so have avoided this injury and loss. Yet now I exhort you to be of good courage; for there shall be no loss of *any* life among you, but
- 23 of the ship *only*. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God,
- 24 whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be

V. 12. *Which is an haven*—Having a double opening, one to the South-west, the other to the North-west.

V. 14. *There arose against it*—The South-wind; *a tempestuous wind called* in those parts *Euroclydon*. This was a kind of hurricane, not carrying them any one way, but tossing them backward and forward. These furious winds are now called *Levanter*s, and blow in all directions from the North-east to the South-east.

V. 16. *We were hardly able to get masters of the boat*—To prevent its being staved.

V. 18. *They lightened the ship*—Casting the heavy goods into the sea.

V. 19. *We cast out the tackling of the ship*—Cutting away even those masts that were not absolutely necessary.

V. 20. *Neither sun nor stars appeared for many days*—Which they could the less spare before the compass was found out.

V. 21. *This loss*—Which is before your eyes.

V. 23. *The God, whose I am, and whom I serve*—How short a compendium of religion! Yet how full! Comprehending both faith, hope, and love.

V. 24. *God hath given*—Paul had prayed for them. And God gave him their lives; perhaps their souls also. And the centurion,

presented before Cæsar: and lo God hath given thee all them that sail
 25 with thee. Wherefore, Sirs, take courage: for I trust in God, that it
 26 shall be even as it hath been spoken to me. But we must be cast on a
 27 certain island. And when the fourteenth night was come, as we were
 driven up and down in the Adriatic sea, about mid-night the sailors
 28 suspected, that they drew nigh some land. And founding, they found
 twenty fathoms; and having gone a little farther, founding again.
 29 they found fifteen fathoms. And fearing lest we should fall upon rough
 places, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.
 30 But when the sailors were attempting to flee out of the ship, and had
 let down the boat into the sea, under pretence that they were going to
 31 carry out anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and
 32 the soldiers, Unless these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then
 33 the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let it fall off. And while

tion, subserving the providence of God, gave to *Paul* the lives of the prisoners. How wonderfully does his providence reign in the most contingent things? And rather will many bad men be preserved with a few good, (so it frequently happens) than one good man perish with many bad. So it was in this ship: so it is in the world. *Thee*—At such a time as this, there was not the same danger, which might otherwise have been, of *St. Paul's* seeming to speak out of vanity, what he really spoke out of necessity. *All the souls*—Not only all the prisoners, as *Julius* afterwards did, ver. 43. Ask for souls; they shall be given thee; yea, more than thou hopest for; that sail with thee—So that *Paul* in the sight of God, was the master and pilot of the ship.

V. 27. *The fourteenth night*—Since they left *Crete*, ver. 18, 19. In the *Adriatic sea*—So the antients called all that part of the *Mediterranean*, which lay South of *Italy*.

V. 30. *The sailors were attempting to flee out of the ship*—Supposing the boat would more safely over the shallows.

V. 31. *Unless these mariners abide in the ship*—Without them ye know not how to save her, ye cannot be saved—He does

not say *We*. That they would not have regarded. The soldiers were not careful for the lives of the prisoners: Nor was *Paul* careful for his own.

We may learn hence, to use the most proper means for security and success, even while we depend on divine providence, and wait for the accomplishment of God's own promise. He never designed any promise should encourage rational creatures to act in an irrational manner; or to remain inactive, when he has given them natural capacities of doing, something at least, for their own benefit. To expect the accomplishment of any promise, without exerting these, is at best vain and dangerous presumption, if all pretence of relying upon it, be not profane hypocrisy.

V. 33. *Ye continue fasting, having taken nothing*—No regular meal; through a deep sense of their extreme danger. Let us not wonder then, if men who have a deep sense of the extreme danger of everlasting death, for a time forget even to eat their bread or to attend their worldly affairs. Much less let us censure that as madness, which may be the beginning of true wisdom.

the day was coming on, Paul exhorted them all to take food, saying, This day is the fourteenth that ye have tarried and continue fasting, 34 having taken nothing. Therefore I exhort you to take food: for this is for your preservation; for there shall not an hair fall from the head 35 of any of you. And having spoken thus, he took bread, and gave thanks to God before them all; and having broken *it*, he began to eat. 36 Then were they all encouraged, and he also took meat. And we were 37 in the ship, in all two hundred and seventy-six souls. And when they 38 were satisfied with food, they lightened the ship, casting out the wheat 39 into the sea. And when it was day, they did not know the land; but they observed a certain creek having a shore, into which they were 40 minded, if possible, to thrust the ship: And having taken up the anchors, they committed *it* to the sea, at the same time loosing the rudder-bands, and hoisting up the stay-sail to the wind, they made for the shore. 41 But falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship a-ground; and the fore-part sticking fast, remained immoveable, but the hinder 42 part was broken by the force of the waves. And the counsel of the soldiers was to kill the prisoners, lest any one should swim away and 43 escape. But the centurion, being desirous to save Paul, hindered them from their purpose, and commanded those that could swim, throwing 44 themselves *into the sea*, first to get away to land. And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship; and so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to land.

V. 34. *This is for your preservation*—That ye may be the better able to swim to shore.

V. 36. *Then were they all encouraged*—By his example, as well as words.

V. 38. *Casting out the wheat*—So firmly did they now depend on what St. Paul had said.

V. 39. *They did not know the land*—Which they saw near them: *having a level shore*.

V. 40. *Loosing the rudder-bands*—Their ships had frequently two rudders, one on each side. These were fastened while they let the ship drive; but were now loosened,

when they had need of them to steer her into the creek.

V. 41. *A place where two seas met*—Probably by reason of a sand-bank running parallel with the shore.

V. 42. *The counsel*—Cruel, unjust, ungrateful.

V. 44. *They all escaped safe to land*—And some of them doubtless received the apostle as a teacher sent from God. These would find their deliverance from the fury of the sea, but an earnest of an infinitely greater deliverance, and are long e're this lodged with him in a more peaceful harbour than *Malta*, or than earth could afford.

V. 1. *Melita*,

XXVIII. And being escaped, we then knew, that the island was called
 2 Melita. And the Barbarians shewed us uncommon kindness; for having
 kindled a fire, they brought us all to it, because of the present rain,
 3 and because of the cold. Now as Paul was gathering a bundle of sticks,
 and laying them on the fire, a viper coming from the heat, fastened
 4 upon his hand. And when the Barbarians saw the venomous animal
 hanging on his hand, they said one to another, Doubtless this man is a
 murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, vengeance hath not
 5 suffered to live. But having shaken off the venomous animal into the
 6 fire, he suffered no harm. However they expected, that he would have
 swollen, or suddenly fallen down dead: but after having waited a con-
 siderable time, seeing no mischief befall him, they changed their minds,
 and said, he was a god.

V. 1. *Melita*, or *Malta*, is about twelve miles broad, twenty long, and sixty distant from *Sicily* to the South. It yields abundance of honey, (whence its name was taken) with much cotton, and is very fruitful, though it has only three feet depth of earth, above the solid rock. The Emperor, *Charles* the fifth gave it, in 1530, to the knights of *Rhodes*, driven out of *Rhodes* by the *Turks*. They are a thousand in number, of whom five hundred always reside on the island.

V. 2. *And the Barbarians*—So the *Romans* and *Greeks* termed all nations but their own. But surely the generosity shewn by these uncultivated inhabitants of *Malta*, was far more valuable than all the varnish which the politest education could give, where it taught not humanity and compassion.

V. 4. *And when the Barbarians saw—they said*—Seeing also his chains, Doubtless this man is a murderer—Such rarely go unpunished even in this life; Whom vengeance hath not suffered to live—They look upon a dead man already.

It is with pleasure we trace among these Barbarians the force of conscience, and belief of a particular providence:

which some people of more learning have stupidly thought it philosophy to despise. But they erred in imagining, that calamities must always be interpreted as judgments. Let us guard against this, lest, like them, we condemn not only the innocent, but the excellent of the earth.

V. 5. *Having shaken off the venomous animal he suffered no harm*—The words of an eminent modern historian are, “No venomous kind of serpent now breeds in *Malta*, neither hurts, if it be brought thither from another place. Children are seen there handling and playing even with scorpions: I have seen one eating them.” If this be so, it seems to be fixed by the wisdom of God, as an eternal memorial of what he once wrought there.

V. 6. *They changed their minds, and said, he was a god*—Such is the stability of human reason! A little before he was a murderer; and presently he is a god: (Just as the people of *Lystra*; one hour sacrificing, and the next stoning.) Nay, but there is a medium. He is neither a murderer, nor a god, but a man of God. But natural men never run into greater mistakes, than in judging of the children of God.

7 And near that place was the estate of the chief man of the island,
 8 named Publius, who receiving us into his house, entertained us cour-
 9 teously three days. Now the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and
 10 bloody flux; to whom Paul went in, and having prayed, laid his hands
 11 on him and healed him. And when this was done, the rest also in the
 12 island, who had disorders, came and were healed, Who likewise honoured
 13 us with many honours, and when we departed, put on board such things
 14 as were necessary.

11 And after three months we sailed in a ship of Alexandria, which had
 12 wintered in the island, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. And arriving
 13 at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days, Whence casting round, we came
 14 to Rhegium, and the South wind rising after one day, we came
 15 the next to Puteoli: Where finding brethren, we were intreated to tarry
 16 with them seven days, and so we went toward Rome. And the brethren
 17 having heard of us, came out thence to meet us, *some* as far as
 Appii Forum, and *others* to the Three Taverns, whom, when Paul saw he
 thanked God and took courage.

16 And when we were come to Rome, the centurion delivered the
 17 prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell
 by himself, with the soldier that kept him. And after three days, he
 called the chief of the Jews together. And when they were come
 together, he said to them, Brethren, though I have done nothing against
 the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet have I been delivered

V. 7. *The chief man of the island*—In wealth, if not in power also. *Three days*—The first three days of our stay on the island.

V. 11. *Whose sign was*—It was the custom of the ancients, to have images on the head of their ships, from which they took their names. *Castor and Pollux*—Two Heathen gods, who were thought favourable to mariners.

V. 15. *The brethren*—That is, the Christians *came out thence to meet us*—It is remarkable that there is no certain account by whom Christianity was planted at Rome. Probably some inhabitants of that city were at *Jerusalem* on the day of pentecost, (*Acts* ii. 10.) and being then converted

themselves, carried the gospel thither at their return. *Appii Forum* was a town fifty-one miles from Rome; *the Three Taverns* about thirty. *He took courage*—He saw *Christ* was at Rome also, and now forgot all the troubles of his journey.

V. 16. *With the soldier*—To whom he was chained, as the Roman custom was.

V. 17. *And after three days*—Given to rest and prayer, *Paul called the chief of the Jews together*—He always sought the Jews first; but being now bound, he could not so conveniently go round to them. *Though I have done nothing*—Seeing him chained, they might have suspected he had. Therefore he first obviates this suspicion.

V. 19. *When*

18 a prisoner from Jerufalem into the hands of the Romans: Who having
 19 examined me, were willing to have releafed *me*, becaufe there was no
 caufe of death in me. But when the Jews opposed *it*, I was constrained
 to appeal to Cæfar; not that I had any thing to accufe my nation
 20 of. For this caufe therefore have I intreated to fee and fpeak with you;
 for *it is* on account of the hope of Ifrael, *that* I am bound with this chain.
 21 And they faid to him, We have neither received letters from Judea
 concerning thee, nor hath any of the brethren coming hither, related or
 22 fpoke any evil of thee. But we defire to hear of thee what thou
 thinkeft; for concerning this feft, we know, that it is every where fpoken
 againft.

23 And having appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging,
 to whom he expounded, testifying the kingdom of God, and perfuading
 them concerning Jcfus, both from the law of Mofes and the prophets,
 24 from morning till evening. And fome believed the things that were
 25 fpoken, and fome believed not. And not agreeing with each other,
 they brake up the afsembly, after Paul had fpoken one word, Well fpake
 26 the Holy Ghofth by the prophet Ifaiah to your fathers, Saying, * Go to:

V. 19. *When the Jews opposed it*—He fpeaks tenderly of them, not mentioning their repeated attempts to murder him. *Not that I had any thing to accufe my nation of*—Not that I had any defign to accufe others, but merely to defend myfelf.

V. 20. *The hope of Ifrael*—What Ifrael hopes for, namely, the *Meffiah* and the refurrection.

V. 21. *We have neither received letters concerning thee*—There muft have been a peculiar providence in this, *nor has any of the brethren*—The Jews, *related*—Professedly, in a fet difcourfe, or *fpoke*—Occasionally, in converfation, *an evil of thee*—How muft the bridle then have been in their mouth!

V. 22. *This feft we know is every where fpoken againft*—This is no proof at all of a bad caufe, but a very probable mark of a good one.

V. 23. *To whom he expounded, testifying*

the kingdom of God, and perfuading them concerning Jcfus—Thefe were his two grand topics, 1. That the kingdom of the *Meffiah* was of a fpiritual, not temporal nature: 2. That *Jcfus of Nazareth* was the very perfon foretold, as the Lord of that kingdom. On this head, he had as much need to perfuade as to convince, their will making as ftrong a refiftance as their understanding.

V. 24. *And fome believed the things that were fpoken*—With the heart as well as understanding.

V. 25. *Well fpake the Holy Ghofth to your fathers*—Which is equally applicable to you.

V. 26. *Hearing ye fhall hear*—That is, ye fhall moft furely hear, *and fhall not understand*—The words manifefly denote a judicial blindnefs, confequent upon a wilful and obftinate refiftance of the truth. Firft: they *would* not, afterwards they *could* not believe.

V. 28. *The*

* Ifaiah vi. 9, &c. Mat. xiii. 14. John xii. 40.

this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand,
 27 and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For the heart of this
 people is waxed gross, and with their ears they hear heavily, and their
 eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with
their ears, and understand with *their* hearts, and should be converted
 28 and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the sal-
 29 vation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear. And when he
 had said these things, the Jews departed, having great debating with each
 other.
 30 And he continued two whole years in his own hired house, and
 31 received all that came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and
 teaching the things that relate to the Lord Jesus Christ, with all freedom
 of speech, no man forbidding him.

V. 28. *The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles*—Namely, from this time. Before this no apostle had been at *Rome*. *St. Paul* was the first.

V. 29. *And Paul continued two whole years*—After which this book was wrote, long before *St. Paul's* death, and was undoubtedly published with his approbation by *St. Luke*, who continued with him to the last, *2 Tim.* iv. 11. *And received all that came to him*—Whether they were *Jews* or *Gentiles*. These two years compleated twenty-five years after our Saviour's passion. Such progress had the gospel made by that time, in the

parts of the world which lay West of *Jerusalem*, by the ministry of *St. Paul* among the *Gentiles*. How far Eastward the other apostles had carried it in the same time, history does not inform us.

V. 31. *No man forbidding him*—Such was the victory of the word of God. Whilst *Paul* was preaching at *Rome*, the gospel shone with its highest lustre. Here therefore the *acts of the apostles* end; and end with great advantage. Otherwise *St. Luke* could easily have continued his narrative to the apostle's death.

N O T E S

O N

St. PAUL's Epistle to the ROMANS.

MANY of the writings of the New Testament are written in the form of epistles. Such are not only those of *St. Paul*, *James*, *Peter*, *Jude*, but also both the treatises of *St. Luke*, and all the writings of *St. John*. Nay, we have seven epistles herein,