

STORIES FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES



Bible Tales for Little Children



Cicely Mary Baldwin.

A little prize from dear Father and Mother
for learning her scripture lessons

So nicely.

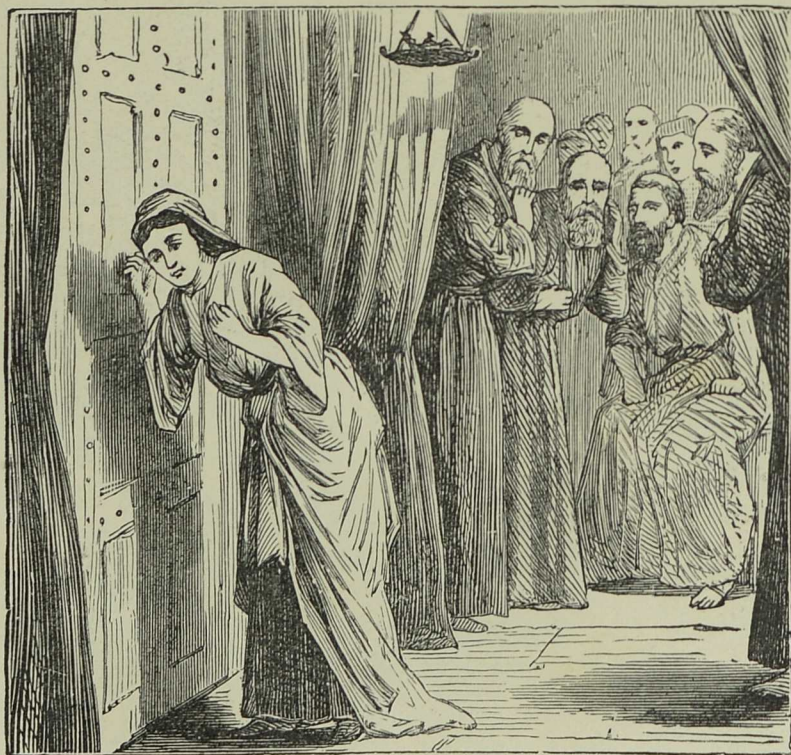
October 6th 1901.



THE STONING OF STEPHEN

STORIES
FROM THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

BIBLE TALES
FOR LITTLE CHILDREN



RHODA ANSWERING PETER'S KNOCK.—ACTS xii.

LONDON
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
56 PATERNOSTER ROW AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD



THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL



BETHANY

STORIES
FROM THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CHAPTER I

THE RETURN OF JESUS TO HEAVEN, AND THE GIFT
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

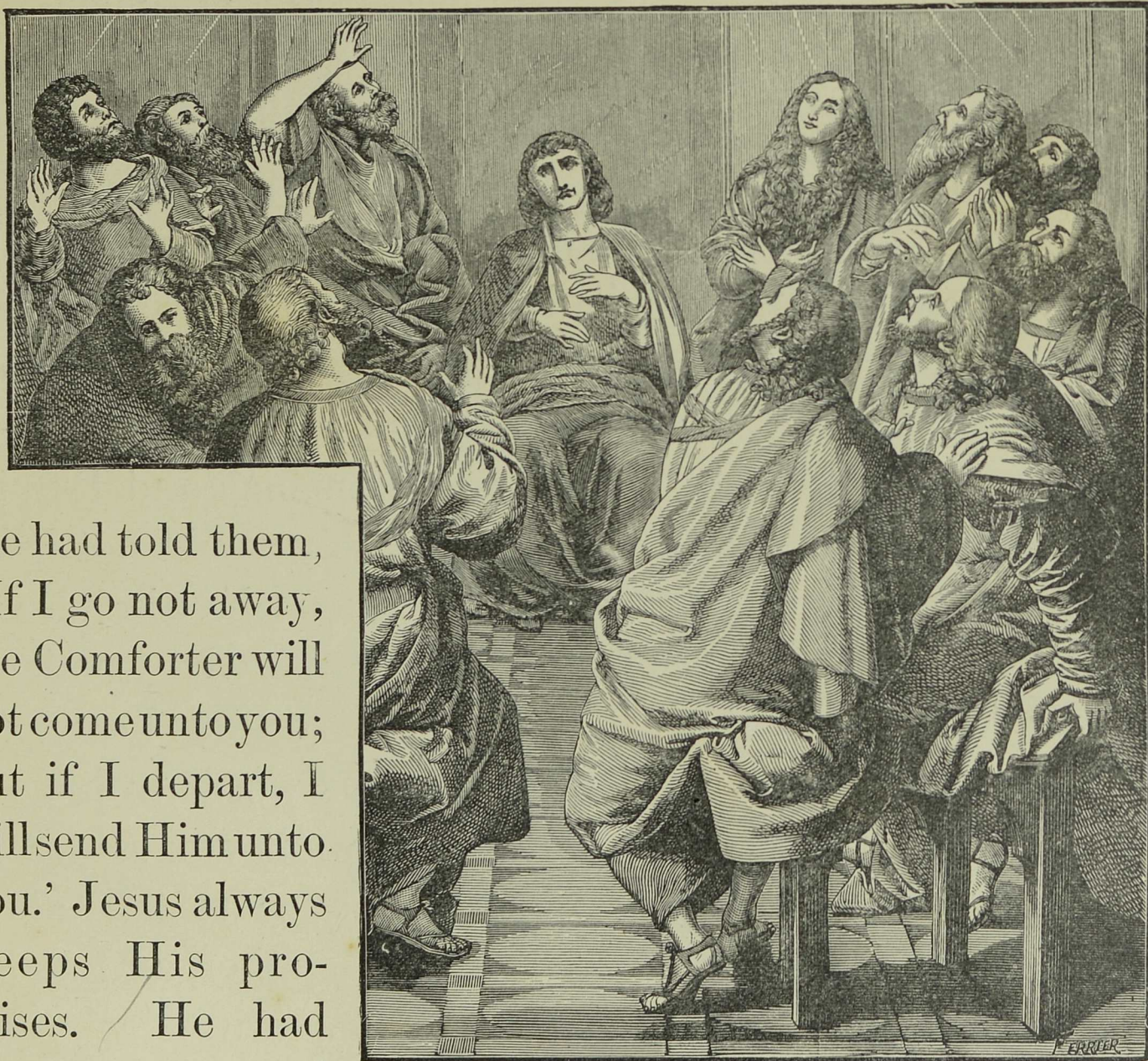
IN the book belonging to this series, called *The Good Shepherd*, you can read about the wonderful words and the wonderful doings of our Saviour. You know that after He had been put to death on the cruel cross, He rose again from the dead. Then for forty days He

stayed on the earth. He talked with His disciples. He made them believe that He had really come to life again. He told them what He wanted them to do. He gave them this promise and command all in one, 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.' The disciples did not then understand what Jesus meant. Although His words are easy for us to understand, yet they had not learned that He loves the people of every land. They thought their work would always be in Jerusalem and Palestine. The Acts—that is, the deeds or doings—of the Apostles tells us how they came at last to do what Jesus wanted.

As soon as Jesus had finished telling the disciples what He wished them to do, 'a cloud received Him out of their sight.' Jesus went up to heaven, and they went back to Jerusalem. For the last words had been spoken, and the ascension took place at Bethany, where Lazarus and Mary and Martha lived. The disciples then chose a man named Matthias to take the place of wicked Judas. Then for ten days they met together in an upper room to sing and to pray and to read the Old Testament.

At last the Day of Pentecost came. Pentecost means the fiftieth day, and was the name given to a feast day that came on the fiftieth day after the great Passover Sabbath. The times in our year which are the same, are Easter for the Passover, and Whitsuntide for Pentecost. On the Day of Pentecost the Christians were all together, and most likely in their upper room, when

‘suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.’ When Jesus was still with His disciples,



He had told them, ‘If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.’ Jesus always keeps His promises. He had gone away, and now the next thing

He did for His disciples was to send the Holy Spirit to comfort their hearts, and to teach their minds, and to help them to do all the wonderful work which Jesus had commanded them to begin.

That Pentecost was a day long remembered in

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Jerusalem. Jews came from all parts of the earth to their Holy City at the times of the great feasts. It will be quite a lesson in ancient geography for you if you will take your Bible maps and find upon them all the places given in verses 9–11 of the second chapter of the Acts.

Very many different languages were spoken by these people, but they were all Jews, and they all loved Jerusalem, and the temple, and the worship there. Now as soon as the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Jesus, they felt that they *must* begin to speak to this great crowd of Jews who had come ‘out of every nation under heaven.’ And then the Holy Spirit worked a great miracle or sign. If you were to stand up before a crowd of Swiss and French and German and Spanish and Russian children, and talk to them in English, they would not know what you were trying to say. But when the disciples on the Day of Pentecost began to speak about ‘the wonderful works of God,’ everyone in that great crowd heard the words spoken, and to each they came as words in his own native speech. Everybody understood what was said. As you may suppose, the people began at once to talk about this wonder; and a great crowd came together, and at last Peter had to preach a long sermon about it.

This sermon is given in Acts ii. 14–40. Peter told the Jews many things which they did not like to hear. He said their rulers had done a very wicked thing when they killed Jesus, that Jesus had come to life again, that it was He who had sent the Holy Spirit, and that in His name all who wished and were willing could be baptized, could have their sins forgiven, and could have the gift

of the Holy Spirit. That same Holy Spirit worked so mightily through Peter on the Day of Pentecost that he got three thousand people to believe in Jesus, and to



PETER PREACHING ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

say they wanted to love and obey Him. Was not that wonderful?

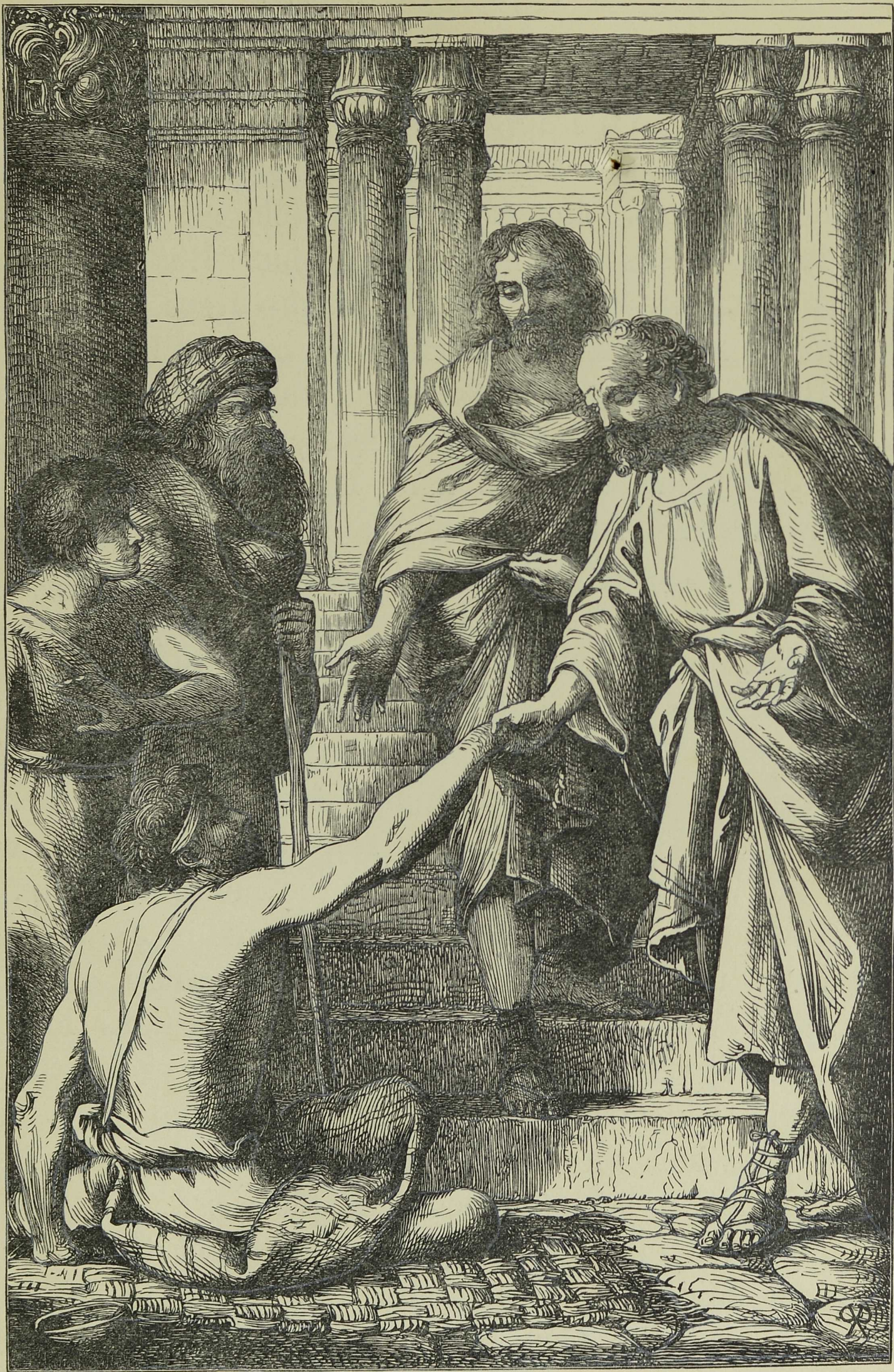
CHAPTER II

THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN

A SHORT time after, Peter and John went up to the temple to pray at the ninth hour. That means about three o'clock in the afternoon. The splendid temple, as you know, stood on the top of one of the rocky hills of Jerusalem where everybody could see it. It had many handsome gates through which the people passed in great numbers into the inner courts where the service was held. One of these gates was called Beautiful, and through that Peter and John meant to go in.

In Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago, as in our great cities to-day, there were many poor deformed people who could only get a living by begging. Just as the two disciples were going through the gate Beautiful, Peter saw a poor lame beggar, a man who had never been able to walk, and whom his friends carried there every day that he might beg. Peter said: 'Look on us.' The man looked up quickly, because he thought Peter was going to give him money. But Peter said: 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.'

Then Peter 'took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and his feet and ankle-bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.' Think how delighted the poor man must have been.



PETER AND JOHN HEALING THE LAME MAN

He had *never* walked. And now he could stand, and walk, and run, and leap. No wonder he praised God.

The healing of the lame man made a very great stir in Jerusalem. Peter and John told all the people that it was Jesus who had healed him. But the chief priests and many of the people thought Jesus was dead, and would not believe that He had come to life again.

The whole city was so excited that Peter and John had to go before the Council and tell them what had taken place, and how the lame man had been healed. They asked very many questions; but they were unable to deny the miracle, for the man who had been lame, and whom they all knew by sight, was there standing before them well and strong. So at last they told the disciples to go away and stop telling the people about Jesus. But Peter and John said that they could not help speaking to the people; and Jesus had told them to do so, and they could not stop teaching them all about the love and the power and the mercy of Jesus.

This great miracle made so much talk in Jerusalem that large numbers believed on Jesus because of the healing of the lame man. And the Christians loved one another very much, and tried to help each other. Those who had lands or houses sold them, and gave the money for which they sold them to the apostles, in order that they might help the poor and the sick. But there are very often in the world people who want to get the credit for doing good deeds, and who yet try to deceive not only men, but God Himself. This is very foolish. Still more, it is very wicked. And even if they are

clever enough to deceive men, they cannot deceive God. There were then among the Christian people in Jerusalem a man named Ananias and his wife, whose name was Sapphira. All the Bible names have meanings. Ananias means, 'one to whom God has been gracious,' and perhaps his parents gave him that name in memory of some blessing which God had given them. Sapphira means most likely the precious stone called a sapphire. These two people sold some land, and then came to Peter and gave him some money. Ananias and his wife had talked the matter over, and had agreed together to deceive Peter. They brought *part* of the money, laid it at his feet, and led him to think it was *all* they had received. They thus did two very wicked things. They tried to make people believe that they were kind and good, when they were really selfish and wicked. And they *acted* a lie, which is just as bad as telling a lie.

We do not know how Peter found out their wicked conduct; but when Ananias came to him he told him, 'Thou hast not lied to men, but to God.' And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down dead. 'And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.' Sapphira did not hear of this dreadful event, and about three hours later she also came to Peter. And Peter, hoping perhaps that the question would cause her to think and make her sorry for what she had done, said: 'Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yes. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried



THE DEATH OF ANANIAS

thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things.'

God teaches us in this way how hateful a sin lying is. It is cowardly; it is very hurtful to others; and in this terrible event, God teaches us that, sooner or later, lying brings punishment upon those who give way to it. God is truth. God is light. Lying comes from Satan, who is called 'the father of lies,' and who is ever trying to make us sin against God. Ananias, in the New Testament, and Gehazi, in the Old Testament, are two awful examples of the danger of lying.

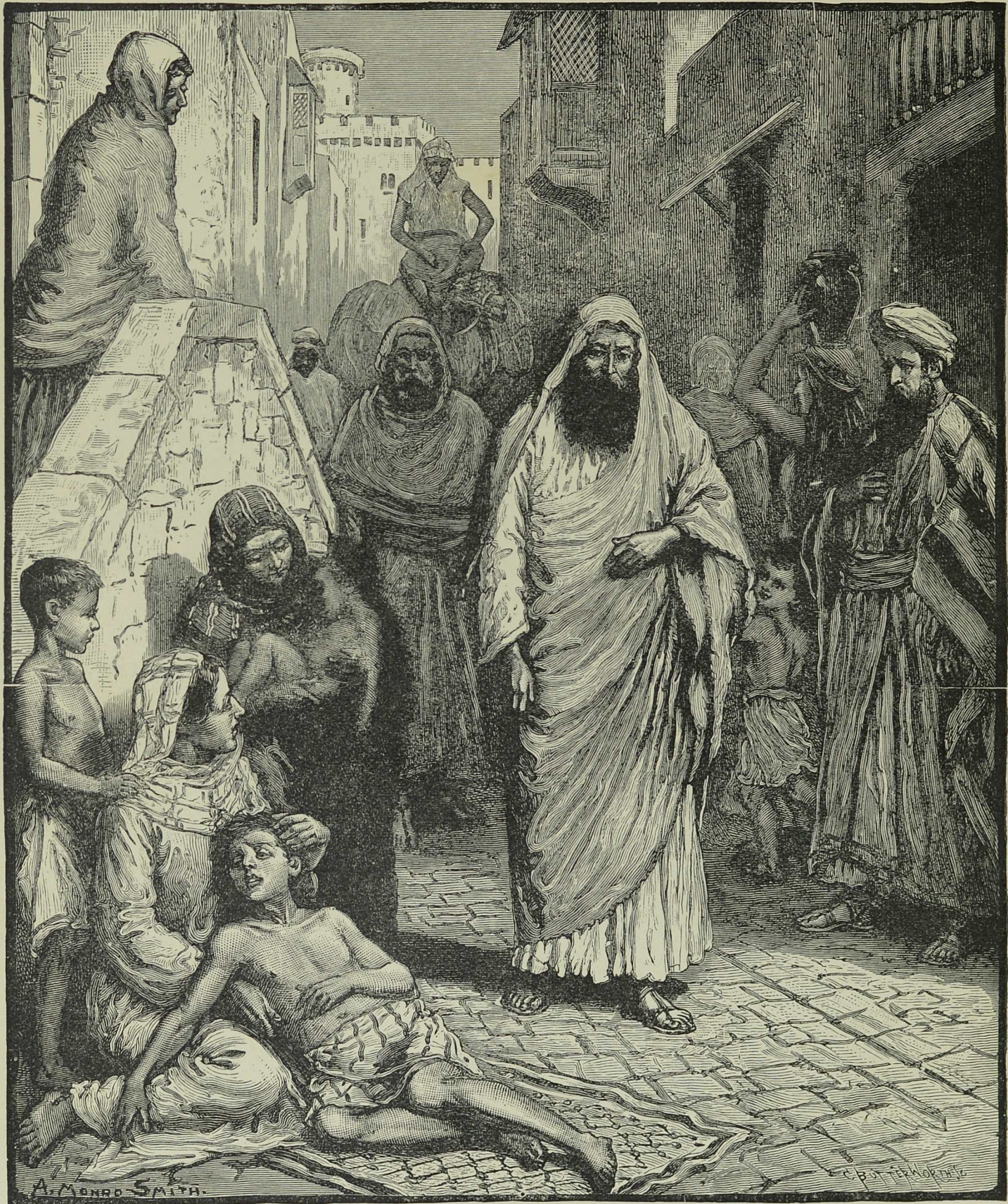


CHAPTER III

THE STONING OF STEPHEN

THE healing of the lame man and the death of Ananias were known all through Jerusalem. Peter and the other apostles were so brave that even when shut up in prison they would not promise to leave off preaching about Jesus. The priests shut them up in prison, but 'the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak to the people all the words of this life.' The reason why the priests were so

angry was because great numbers of people came from all parts to see and to hear Peter, and they believed what he



PETER PASSING THROUGH THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM

taught when they saw the wonderful things that were done. So great was his power that the Bible tells us, 'they

brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them . . . and they were healed every one.' All this made the priests and scribes very angry. Some of them wished to punish Peter and the rest. But a wise man among them, named Gamaliel, spoke these sensible words. He said: 'If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found fighting against God.' Gamaliel's advice was followed, and for the time they let Peter and the rest go.

The number of the Christians increased so fast that the apostles could not manage all their affairs. So they persuaded the believers to chose out seven men, who were to be called deacons, and who were to help the apostles. Their names were Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. We know nothing more of any of these men except the first, Stephen. Of him we are told, he was 'a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost.'

Stephen was able to preach very well, and one of the longest speeches in the Bible is the defence he made when he was brought before the Council. The chief priests and the leading people of Jerusalem became more and more angry as they saw the number of Christian disciples growing every day. And so at last they determined to use force. They had killed Jesus, and now they were quite ready to kill His disciples. Stephen was arrested because he was very brave, and a very fine speaker; and even his enemies found 'they were not able to resist the wisdom and the

spirit by which he spake.' So they got false witnesses to tell lies about him, and he was seized and brought before the Council.

The long speech Stephen made in his defence is given in the seventh chapter of the Acts. You should read it very carefully. The Jews could not answer it, and so they did what wicked men who fought against the truth often have done in the past, they killed the teacher. They cried out against Stephen, and dragged him outside the gates of Jerusalem, and then 'they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.'

But force is never able to kill truth. Stephen was the first Christian martyr. The word martyr means witness, and it has come now to mean one who dies rather than deny what he believes to be truth. Since Stephen's day, great numbers of men and women have died rather than leave off loving and talking about Jesus. The very men who stoned Stephen 'laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.' That young man was the favourite pupil of Gamaliel. He believed the men who stoned Stephen were doing right, and yet in after years we find that young man Saul himself loving and serving Jesus, and preaching His gospel to the Jews.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

MANY of the Christians in Jerusalem were very sad at the death of Stephen. The Jews cast many into prison, and did all they could to stamp out Christianity. Yet out of this evil, good came. The disciples seem to have forgotten the words of Jesus, that they were to preach Him in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. But when this storm of violence drove them away to many different parts, then they remembered the saying of Jesus, and began to obey it. One of the disciples, named Philip, went to the city of Samaria and preached there, and got many of the people to believe. But he found there a man named Simon, who was a sorcerer. That is, he was a man who pretended to be able to work wonders, and to tell what was going to happen, and to bring good or evil upon people just as he wished. Of course he was not able to do these things, but he got the people to believe in him. And he did all this for money. But when Philip came preaching forgiveness through Jesus without money and without price, even Simon himself believed and was baptized.

This work was talked about so much that at last Peter and John went to Samaria to look into it. They were very glad to find how much Philip had done, and then when they prayed the Holy Ghost came upon all the converts. Now when Simon saw this, he thought



SIMON TRYING TO BUY THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Peter and John were sorcerers like himself; and so he came and offered them money, and said: 'Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.' But Peter said unto him: 'Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.'

All God's best gifts are free. No one can buy pardon, or truth, or heaven. They are the free gifts of God's great love, and they can come to us only through Jesus. All the money in the world cannot *buy* them. And yet the poorest child may have them if he asks Jesus for them, and humbly trusts in His great love. That was why Peter spoke so sternly to Simon; and at last the old sorcerer said: 'Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.' We hear nothing more of Simon, and do not know whether he became a good man or not.

Peter and John, on their way back to Jerusalem, 'preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.' But Philip went south; and near the town of Gaza, as he was walking along the high road, he saw a chariot coming along. And sitting in the chariot was a man with a very dark face, and in his hand a book. It was not at all like our books. It was a roll of parchment, and the words on it were written, not printed. Printing was not found out until fourteen hundred years after.

As the chariot came near, Philip could hear the words, for the man was reading aloud. Philip knew them. They were from Isaiah, the part in our Bible numbered Chapter liii. And Philip said: 'Understandest

thou what thou readest?' And the man said: 'How can I, except some man should guide me?' The traveller was going on a long journey. He was a great officer of



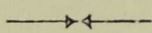
W. Orchardson Del.

J. Borders. Sc

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN IN THE CHARIOT

state in Ethiopia, a country in Africa. He was a believer in the Jewish religion, and he had come hundreds and

hundreds of miles to be at one of the great feasts. He asked Philip to come and sit with him in the chariot. And then Philip told him all about Jesus, and how Isaiah had foretold His life and His sufferings and His death. And the Ethiopian believed what Philip said; and when they came to some water Philip baptized him, and he went on his way rejoicing in his new and wonderful knowledge.



CHAPTER V

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

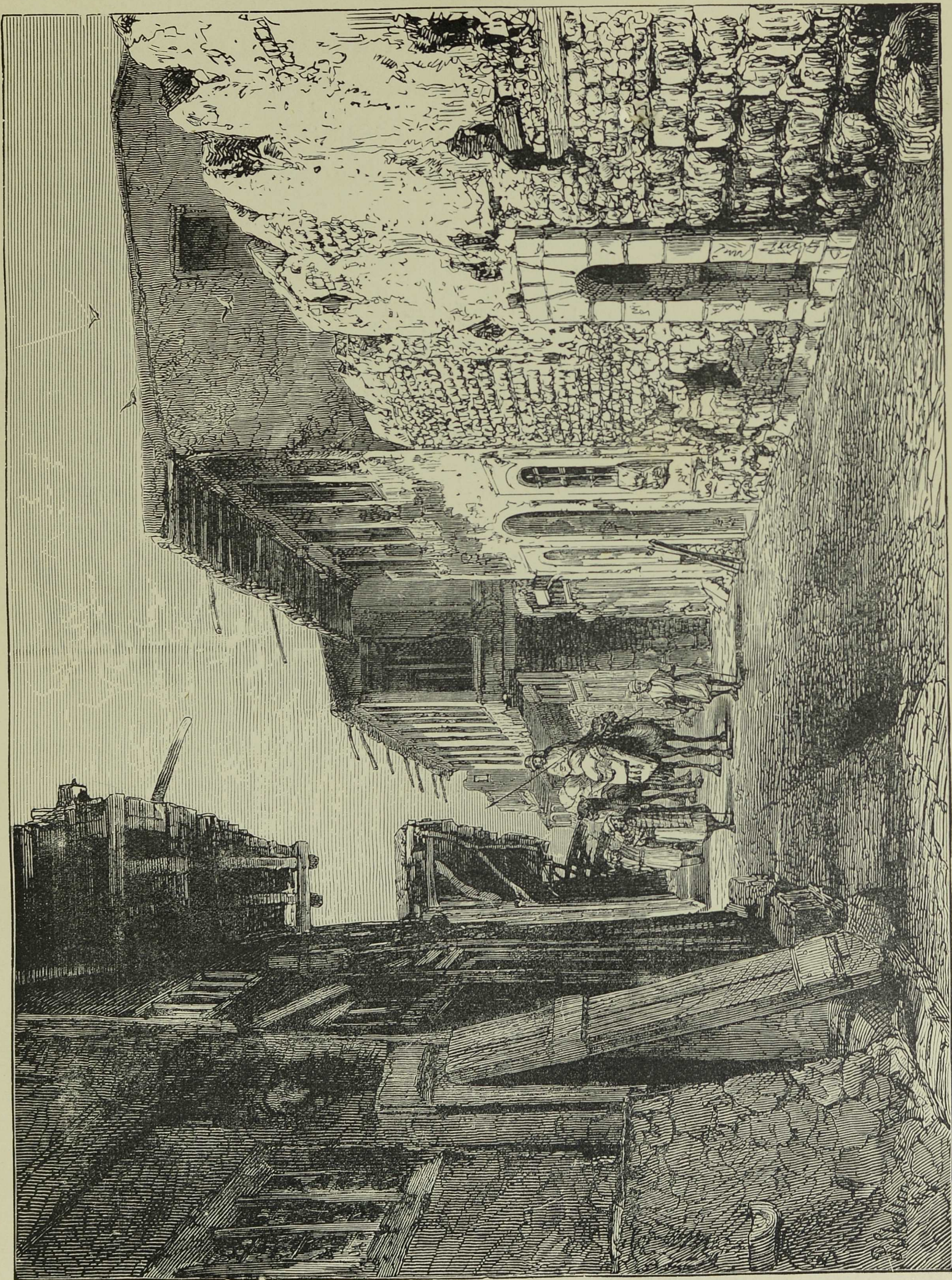
WE have already seen how nobly Stephen died rather than deny the love and the power of the Saviour. The Bible tells us that when the cruel and wicked Jews took off their long outer dress in order that they might the more easily throw the great stones at Stephen which were to kill him 'they laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.'

The young Jew Saul believed that Jesus was dead, that His words were untrue, and that all who tried to please Him ought to be punished. Long years after, when he was trying to get his own countrymen to believe in Jesus, he told them about his early life. He said (Acts xxii. 3): 'I verily am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel.' Young Jews went to Jerusalem, just as young Englishmen go to Oxford and Cambridge to be educated. His teachers were

proud of Saul, and thought that he would become a great man. After the death of Stephen, Saul was so angry with the Christians that he tried to shut up in prison all he could find in Jerusalem. And then he asked the chief priests to give him letters to the chief Jews at Damascus, so that they might help him to make war on the disciples of Jesus living there. He thought he was doing right; but he had deceived himself.

When we do not let God teach us the right things to say, and the right things to do, we may say and do very wicked things, and yet believe that God is pleased with us. Many years later, when Saul was writing about what he tried to do at this time, he explained it by saying, 'I did it ignorantly in unbelief.' But the chief priests were glad to help him, and glad of his help. They gave Saul the letters, then he got together his men and his horses, and he rode along the great highway that runs from Jerusalem to Damascus.

We do not know how far he had gone when a very strange thing happened. You can see a picture of it on the back of the title-page. He and his companions were riding along the road. The sun was shining in the sky, and in Palestine the sun shines much more brightly than it ever does in Europe or America. Suddenly a fierce light, very much brighter than the sun, beat down upon them. The men and the horses were frightened. Saul fell to the ground, and then he heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the



THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT, DAMASCUS

goads.' This meant that Saul had not been quite certain that he was doing right. His conscience was not easy. And so the Lord Jesus came to him, and spoke to him from heaven, and told him that he was to turn right round. Instead of trying to punish and to hurt the Christians, he himself was to become one, and to go and tell people how loving and merciful Jesus was.

The men with Saul were all speechless, and afraid. They could hear the voice, but they could not understand what was said, and they could not see Jesus. And Saul said: 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' Jesus told Saul to go into Damascus, and that there he would be told what he ought to do. But when he rose up, he found he was blind. So his men had to take him by the hand and lead him into Damascus. Saul was very proud. It must have hurt him very much to go thus helpless into the city to which he had hoped to come full of pride and full of power.

In Damascus there is a street which was called Straight then, and is known by the same name now. There Saul lodged. And he was three days and three nights without food, and blind. He had much to think about, and he thought much. He prayed much about the very strange things which had happened to him. On the third day a man named Ananias came to him. We have read about the bad Ananias; this one was a good man. He had been sent to Saul by Jesus. As soon as he came into the room and put his hands on Saul, scales fell from the eyes of the blind man; and he was able to see once more. Then Ananias told Saul

that he was to become a preacher of the gospel. He began at once. He joined the little band of Christians



S. J. GROVES. DEL.

E. BORGERS. SC.

ANANIAS RESTORING SAUL'S SIGHT

in Damascus. Then he went to the Jews, and told them how he had changed his views, and asked them to obey

Jesus. They were at first very much astonished, and then they became very angry. They argued with Saul, and then when they found they could not answer him,



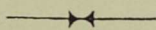
W. Z. Orchardson Del

J. Borders Sc

PAUL'S ESCAPE FROM DAMASCUS

they tried to kill him. Saul had to hide, and then the Jews watched the gates day and night in order to kill

him if he tried to go away. They also hunted for him everywhere in Damascus. At last 'the disciples took Saul by night and let him down by the wall in a basket.' And so he escaped, and went into Arabia, and then for a short time to Jerusalem, and at last back to Tarsus to his old home.



CHAPTER VI

PETER AT JOPPA AND CÆSAREA

SOON after Saul came to know and love Jesus, Peter left Jerusalem. He went first to Lydda, and there he healed a sick man named Æneas. Then he went on to Joppa, where he stayed a long while, lodging in the house of a tanner, whose name, like his own, was Simon. Joppa, now called Jaffa, from whence come the lovely Jaffa oranges, is on the sea. Peter was a fisherman, and probably chose Simon's house because it was near the shore. Peter loved to hear the sound of the waves breaking on the beach. Joppa was a busy port, with many ships coming and going, and so it was a good place in which to preach the gospel. That was the reason why Peter stayed there.

The reason why he came there from Lydda was this: At Joppa there lived a woman whose name in Aramaic—that is, the language the Jews spoke—was Tabitha. In Greek this becomes Dorcas, and means a doe or a gazelle. Dorcas was kind and good, and spent

much of her time in making clothes for the sick and the poor. She was 'full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.' In many parts of the world now, good Christian ladies come together to sew and to make clothes,



JAFFA, THE ANCIENT JOPPA

which are given to the poor and needy. These meetings are often called 'Dorcas Societies,' after the name of the good woman who once lived in Joppa. Now while



PETER RAISING DORCAS TO LIFE

Peter was at Lydda, Dorcas died. Her friends sent to Lydda, and asked Peter to come to them at once. This he did, and 'when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. And Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed: and turning to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.' This great miracle filled everybody in Joppa with wonder, 'and many believed in the Lord.'

While Peter lived in Joppa, God gave him other work of a very special kind to do. When Jesus was with His disciples, He often found it hard to get them to understand and to believe His words. Peter was a Jew, and all Jews believed that it was wrong to eat with people that were not Jews. They also believed that God was *their* God, but that He did not love and want to bless all men so much as He did the Jews. But the time had come when Jesus was to teach Peter a great lesson, and through him to teach it to all nations. The lesson was that He loved all men; that He died for *all* men; that *all* might, if they were sorry for their sins, love Him and become His servants.

One day Peter went up to the flat roof of Simon's house. All the roofs in the East are flat, and many of the houses have staircases outside, going right up to the roof. It was the sixth hour,—that is, twelve o'clock,—and Peter went up to pray. He was hungry after awhile; and as he waited for them to get his dinner ready, he

fell asleep. And then like Jacob, and like Joseph and Daniel, he dreamed a dream, or he saw a vision. A great sheet came down from heaven, having in it many beasts and fowls and creeping things. And a voice came, saying, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But Jews had been commanded by Moses not to eat in the sheet. And 'Not so, Lord; for anything common the voice said: cleansed, that call And this sheet times. Then Peter gan to think what could possibly soon to find out. of teaching him just as ready to to people who to the Jews them-

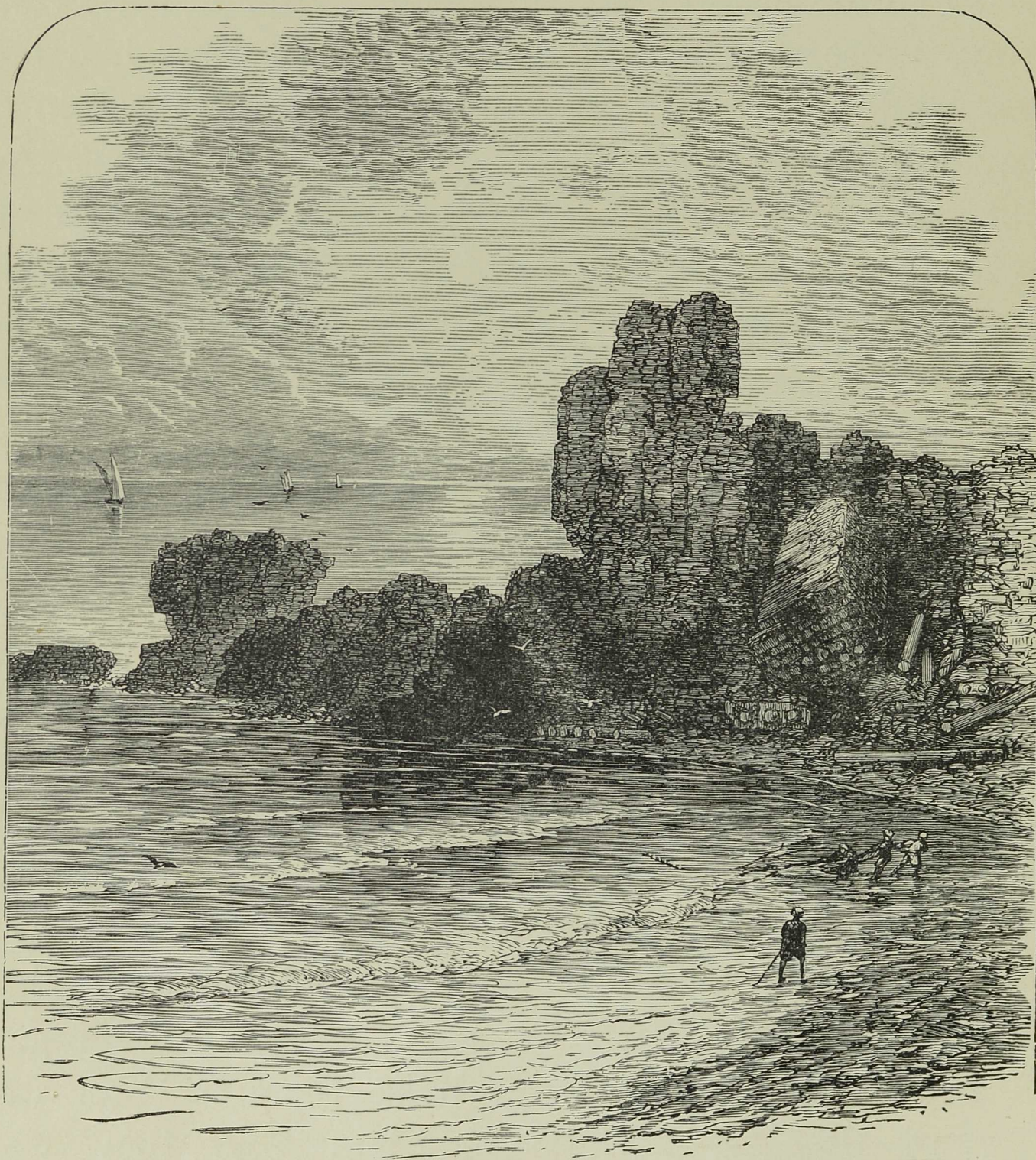
It was God's way that he must be preach the gospel were not Jews, as selves.



A ROMAN CENTURION

Peter was thinking this vision, a knock and two men asked if Peter lived there. Peter went down to them, and they told him who they were. Their master was a Roman centurion named Cornelius—that is, he was captain over a hundred Roman soldiers. He lived at Cæsarea. He was a good man, who prayed to God, and who was kind to the poor. To him the day before, in a vision, God had sent an

angel. The angel told Cornelius that God was pleased with his prayers and with his kind deeds, and told him to send to Joppa for Peter, and that Peter



THE RUINS OF CAESAREA

would tell him what he ought to do. Peter was very much surprised at this. But he went to Caesarea, and at the house of Cornelius he found many friends gathered together. He preached to them quite a long

sermon, and the event itself is so important that it fills the tenth and nearly the whole of the eleventh chapters of the Acts. Then Peter baptized Cornelius and his friends.

These were the first men, not Jews, who became disciples of Jesus. Soon after, some strict Jewish Christians asked Peter about the matter. They did not wish the Gentiles to become Christians. His answer was, God gave them the Holy Ghost. He went on to say: 'Then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I should withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.' The word Gentiles means all people who are not Jews.



CHAPTER VII

PETER IN PRISON

NOT very long after his vision, Peter went back to Jerusalem. The king who then ruled Judæa under the Romans was named Herod. He was not the cruel king who killed all the little children in Bethlehem. His name was Herod Agrippa I., and he was a grandson of Herod the Great. He wished to do something to please the chief priests and the Jews, in order that they might come to like him better than they did. So he killed James, the brother of John, one of the apostles. And

when he saw how much the Jews were pleased by this, he took Peter and shut him up in prison. He meant to keep him in gaol till 'Easter'; that is, till the Passover feast, when Jerusalem would be crowded with Jews from all parts of the world. Then he meant to kill Peter. All this took place in the year A.D. 44, about seven years after Saul's conversion.

The Romans used to keep their prisoners very safely. They were never left alone. Both by day and by night two soldiers were chained to Peter, one to his right arm, and the other to his left. So there did not seem any hope of escape. But the friends of Peter were all praying for him. And things which men cannot possibly do are very easy to God. In the middle of the night before the day on which Herod meant to kill Peter, the Lord saved him. The men chained to Peter were asleep. The keepers of the prison were asleep. Peter was asleep. But an angel came and touched him. His chains fell off. His guards still slept. The doors of the prison opened of their own accord as Peter and the angel came to them. But as soon as they reached the street the angel went away. This teaches us that God does for us what we cannot do ourselves. But when we are able to help ourselves, He expects us to do so. God opened the doors for Peter; but He expected Peter himself to walk or to run away from his enemies as soon as he was outside the prison.

The first thing Peter did was to go to the house of his friends. He knocked at the door, and a girl named Rhoda came to the gate. There is a picture of her on the title-page. When she asked who was there, and heard



PETER'S ESCAPE FROM PRISON

Peter's voice, she was so excited that she ran in to tell the others, and left Peter outside in the street. Then, although they had all been praying very hard to God to save Peter, they would not believe Rhoda, and said that it must be Peter's ghost. But Peter kept knocking at the door, and at last when they opened it, they were glad to see him free and well. Peter told them how he had got out of the prison, and then before the morning came he went away and hid himself.



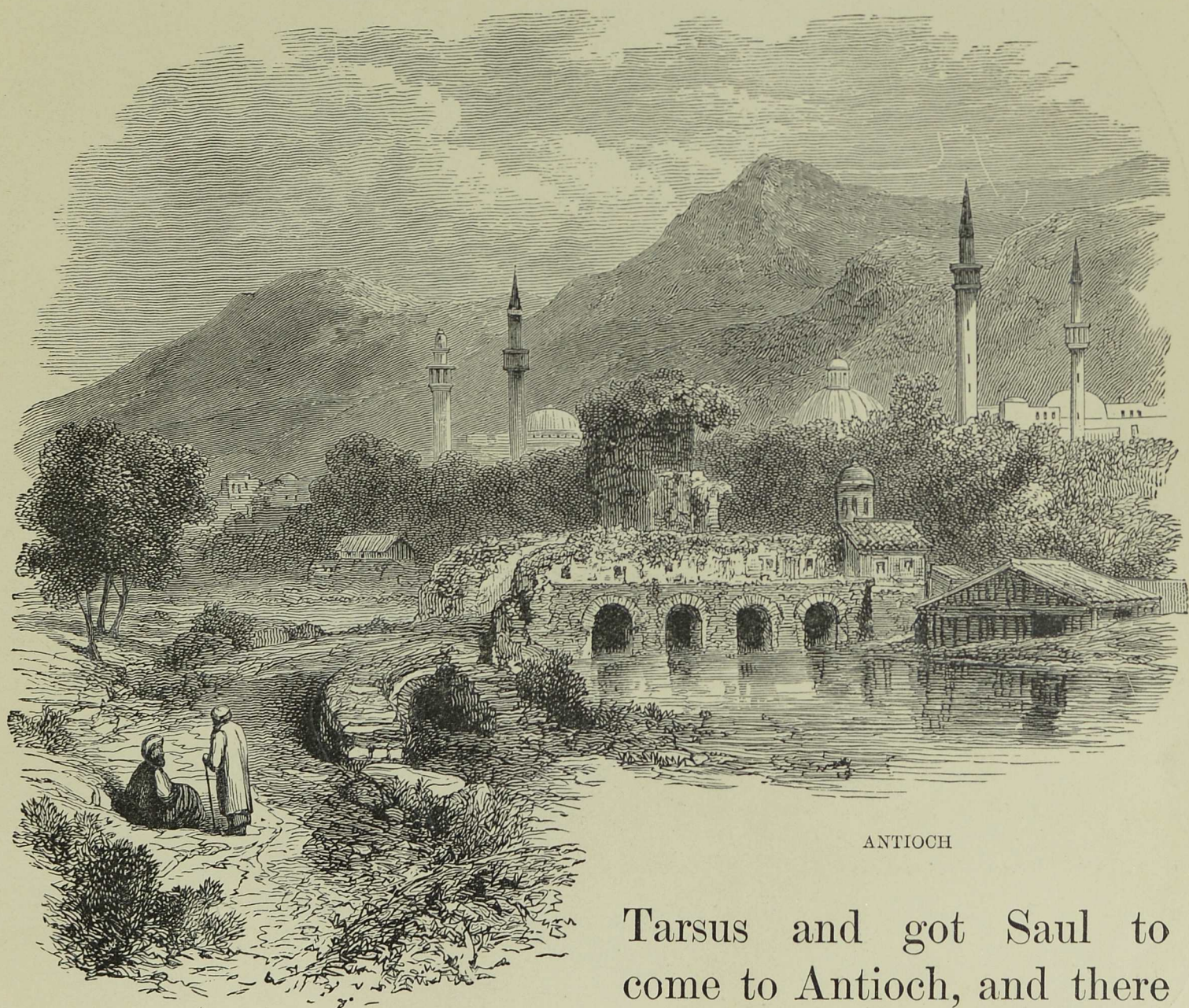
CHAPTER VIII

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

ALL this time Jesus was slowly teaching His disciples how to obey His last command, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' The death of Stephen had scattered the disciples to many different countries. Peter's sermon to Cornelius had done much. And in the great city called Antioch many Gentile Christians had come together and formed themselves into a church. 'The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.' They were called so, at first, by way of ridicule and reproach. But Christian—that is, one who believes in, who trusts to, and who loves and obeys Jesus—is the noblest name that can be given to any one.

Antioch was a large and rich, lovely city. It was on the banks of the Orontes, and very many people lived there. Large numbers of people also came to see the city.

Among the Christian teachers who came from Jerusalem to Antioch was Barnabas, whose name means 'Son of Consolation.' He was a good and kind man. He had got to know Saul, and to like him. And so when the Christians in Antioch began to increase, Barnabas went to



ANTIOCH

Tarsus and got Saul to come to Antioch, and there preach the gospel. The two worked in Antioch for a whole year, and then the Spirit of the Lord said: 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' This work was to go out as missionaries—the first Christian missionaries of whom we have any history. So all the Christians

in Antioch came together and prayed, and then sent Barnabas and Saul away.

They went first to Seleucia, a port near the mouth of the Orontes. There they went on board a ship, and sailed



PAUL REBUKING ELYMAS BEFORE SERGIUS PAULUS

out into the Mediterranean Sea to the island of Cyprus. They landed at a place called Salamis, and then walked through the island, preaching as they went, until they came to Paphos, where the governor lived. Paphos was a very

wicked town, wholly given up to idolatry. The governor was a Roman, whose name was Sergius Paulus. He was a wise man, and he wanted to hear what Barnabas and Saul could tell him about Jesus. But a sorcerer named Elymas tried to hinder him from hearing their message. This made Saul rebuke Elymas, and tell him that as a punishment for his wickedness the Lord would make him blind for a season. And this came to pass at once, so that Elymas could not even go from the presence of Sergius Paulus until they came and led him away. This miracle led the Roman governor to believe in Jesus.

From Paphos, Barnabas and Saul sailed away to Perga. If you look in your Bibles at the ninth verse of the thirteenth chapter of the Acts, you will read the words, 'Then Saul (who is also called Paul).' Why Saul's name should have been changed, we do not know. But from this time he is always called Paul, and he is always spoken of as the chief man of the company in which he happens to be. Hence we read in the thirteenth verse: 'When Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia.' Thence they journeyed to another city called Antioch. In order to show that this was not the great city on the Orontes, it is always called 'Antioch in Pisidia.' You can easily find it on the map of Paul's journeys in your Bibles. There on the Sabbath day Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue, that is, the Jews' church. It was the custom in synagogues if the ruler saw strangers there to send to them, and ask if they had anything they would like to say to the people. This was exactly what Paul and Barnabas wished. So Paul stood

up and made quite a long speech about Jesus and His words and His love and His death. Those present were so pleased that they asked Paul to come the next Sabbath, which he did. 'And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.' These Jews had not learned the lesson which God had taught Peter and Paul and Barnabas, and they would not learn it, but drove Paul and Barnabas out of their city.

The next city to which Paul and Barnabas went was Iconium. Here they lived a long while, talking to the people, and teaching everyone who was willing to learn all they could about Jesus. Here also the Gentiles were glad to hear them; but the Jews at last got very angry, and tried to stone Paul and Barnabas, and drove them away. Then they went on to two cities called Lystra and Derbe.

At Lystra, Paul healed a man who had been lame all his life.* As everybody in Lystra knew this poor cripple, you can imagine how great a stir this miracle made. The people were very ignorant, and believed in the existence of many gods. So when they saw the lame man healed, they cried: 'The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men.' Because, probably, Barnabas was a very fine-looking man, they called him Jupiter; and Paul, because he was the chief speaker, Mercury. Jupiter, the Greeks and Romans falsely believed, was the chief god, and Mercury was the one he used to send with his messages. The heathen priests got together and took an



PAUL IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

ox and flowers and presents, and came and wished to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas. But they tore their clothes to show how sorry they were, and they told the people again and again that they were only men like themselves. They said they were messengers of the one true and living God, who had sent them to make known to the people of Lystra His love and His truth. So at last the people were persuaded to take away the ox and the flowers, and to think no more of treating Paul and Barnabas as though they were gods. /

It is sad to see how slowly people learn the truth. Some of the wicked Jews from Antioch and Iconium came to Lystra, and soon turned the people against the gospel. They actually got the very people who had believed Paul to be a god to stone him. He was dragged out of the city senseless, believed to be dead. But he recovered, and then he and Barnabas went to Derbe. And after preaching there they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch. Notwithstanding the Jews, many in all these cities believed the word preached by Paul. He told them what was only too plain from the way in which he himself had been treated, 'that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' Then Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, from whence they had started. So ended the first great Christian missionary journey.

Soon after their return, the Christians at Antioch came together to rejoice over the way in which God 'had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.' We, who are Gentiles, find it hard to believe that there ever was a time when people thought that God could love and choose for His



PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA

service only one nation—the Jews. It was natural that the Jews, who did not believe in Jesus, should be angry at the preaching of such ‘good tidings.’ But some, even of the Jewish Christians, would not believe that what Peter and Paul and Barnabas had done was right. A great deal of argument took place, but in the end most of them came to see how much better and grander it was for all people to become Christians, whether they were Jews or not, than for all to have become Jews first, and then Christians.

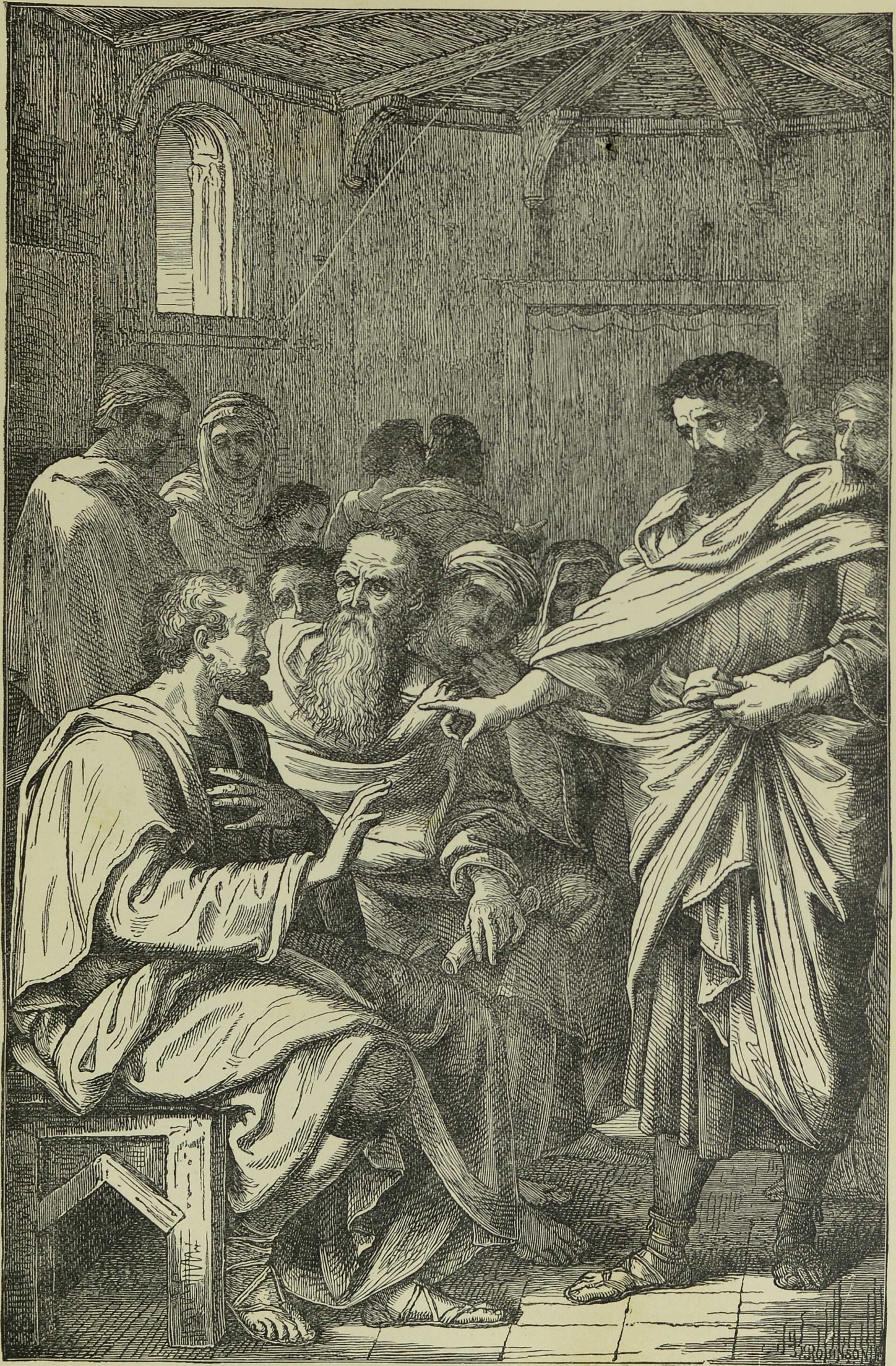
Even Peter lost courage once. Paul tells us in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians how when Peter came to Antioch he first was willing to eat with Gentiles, and then refused. Paul, who was very thorough, did not like this; and so as Peter had done this publicly, Paul, in the presence of others, told Peter how wrongly he was acting. The Bible not only praises men when they do well, but it blames them when they do ill.



CHAPTER IX

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

✓ **P**AUL and Barnabas lived on and worked for awhile in Antioch. But one day Paul said: ‘Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.’ On the first journey they had taken with them a young man named John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas. But at Perga his heart had failed him, and



PAUL REBUKING PETER

he left them. Now Barnabas wished to try him again. But Paul would not consent. He did not like men who became afraid too easily. This led to a quarrel, and in



PAUL AND LYDIA

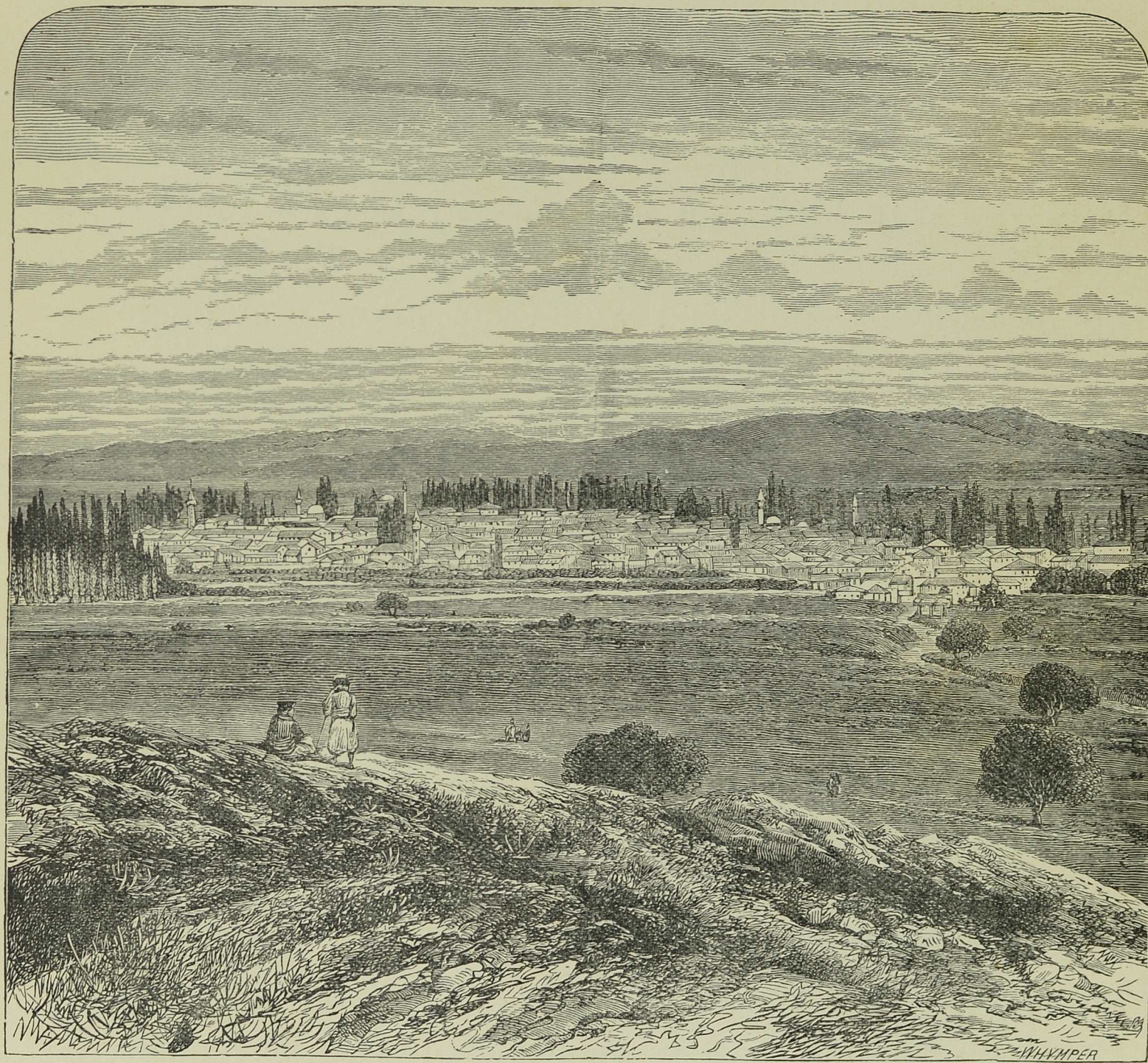
the end Barnabas went to Cyprus with John Mark, while Paul took Silas, and went through Syria and Cilicia. It was a bad thing that these good men should quarrel.

But God used even their quarrel in the end, so that larger numbers of people might hear the gospel. Long years afterwards, Paul got to like and to trust John Mark again.

Paul and Silas came, in the course of this second journey, to Lystra and Derbe again, and at Lystra he met a young man whom he grew to love very much, and who became a great helper to him—Timothy. He took him with him as a missionary. The time had come now for Europe to receive the gospel. Paul wanted to go to Bithynia, but God would not allow him to do so. He sent him first to Troas, and then across the sea to Philippi, 'a chief city of Macedonia.' Some of the women in Philippi each Sabbath day used to meet by the river side to pray. There Paul and Silas went and talked with them. One, whose name was Lydia, became a Christian. And Paul and Silas went to lodge in her house. She had not been born in Philippi, but at a town a long way off, in Asia, called Thyatira. Her business was to sell purple, and she had come to live at Philippi in order to carry on her trade.

One day in Philippi, as Paul and Silas were walking through the streets, a girl met them who was supposed to be able to tell people anything they wished to know. People gave her masters money, and then she answered their questions. She cried after Paul so much, that at last he said to the evil spirit in her: 'I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' The spirit came out. She was no longer able to answer questions. Her masters were very angry, because they could get no more

money. So they brought Paul and Silas to the magistrates, and told them that they were upsetting the city. The magistrates beat them, and then shut them up in gaol. The magistrates were Romans. Paul, though they did



THYATIRA

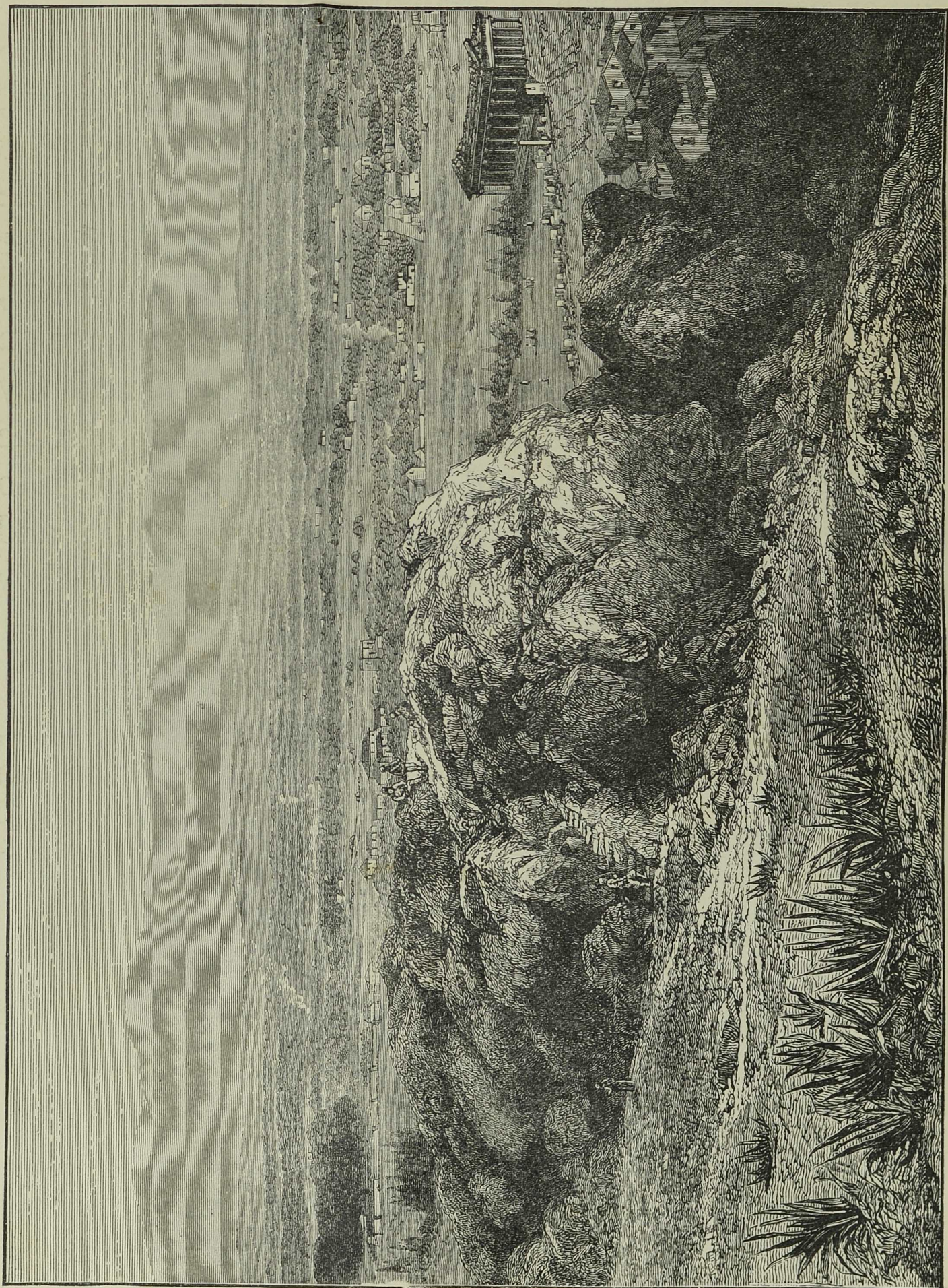
not know this, was a Roman citizen, and ought not to have been beaten or put into prison without a fair trial. In the middle of the night, their backs sore after the beating, their feet fast in the stocks, Paul and Silas were singing

hymns. God can always make His servants happy where all other people would be miserable. All who were in the prison heard the hymns. In the middle of the night there was an earthquake, the doors flew open, and the gaoler, taking his sword, was going to kill himself, because he thought the prisoners had all run away. But Paul cried: 'Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.' Then the gaoler came and cast himself before Paul and Silas, and said: 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.' And he believed and was baptized, and then he did all he could for Paul and Silas. He took them into his house and washed their wounds, and fed them; and great was his joy at the good news of Jesus which they had taught him.

Early in the morning the magistrates, ashamed probably of the wrong and hasty way in which they had acted, told the gaoler to let Paul and Silas go. But Paul stood on his rights. He said: 'They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.' And these Roman magistrates had to come publicly and themselves take out of the prison the men they had most unjustly put there.

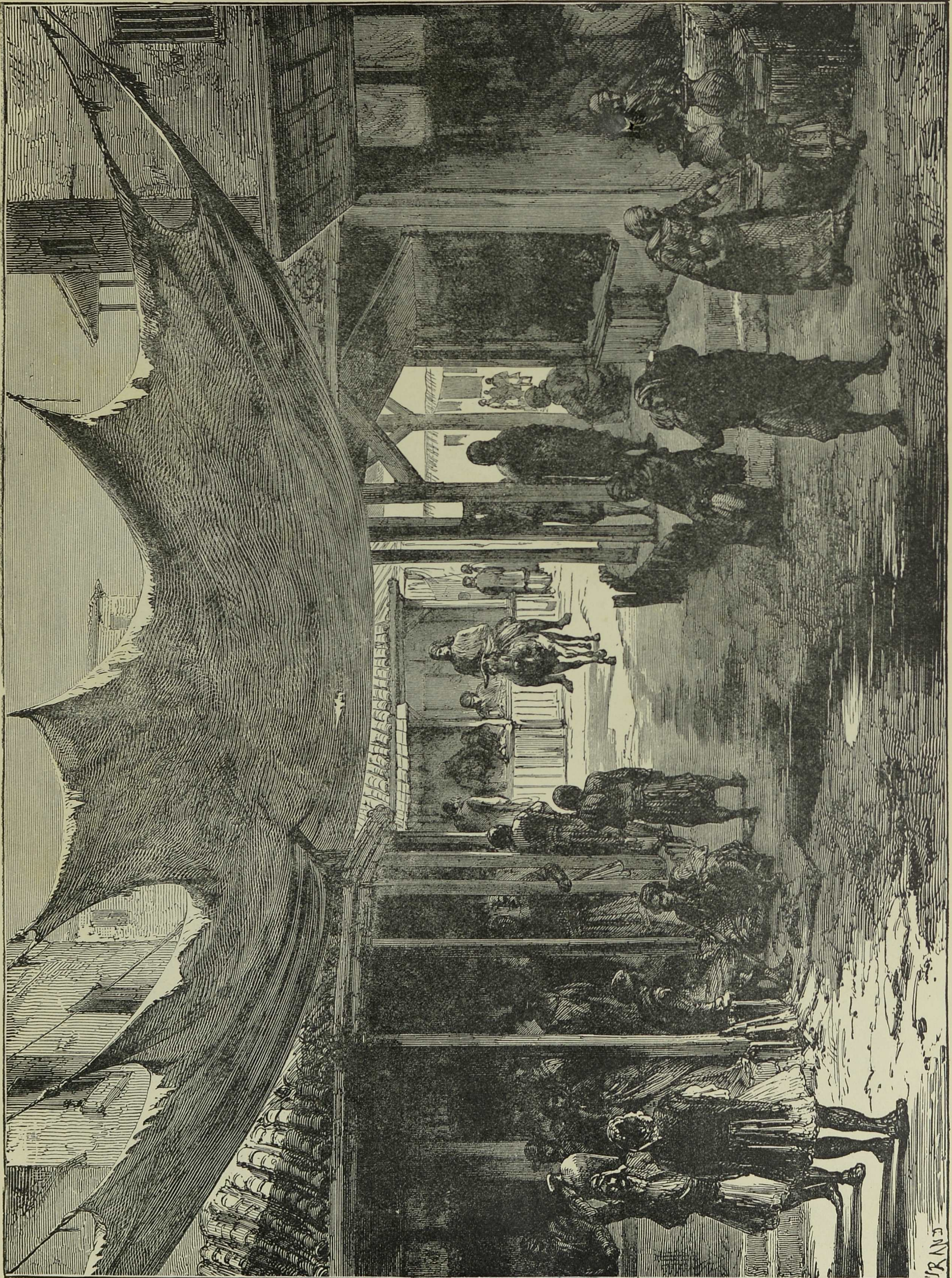
Paul and Silas travelled on to Thessalonica and then to Berea, and in the end Paul went on alone to Athens, while Silas and Timothy stayed in Thessalonica. Athens was one of the most famous cities in the world. Its people were very clever. It was full of the most splendid buildings. It was a rich city. But the people cared for

nothing except to hear the latest news. Paul went to the



AREOPAGUS,—THAT IS, MARS HILL,—ATHENS, AS IT IS TO-DAY

market-place, and talked with the people, and looked at all



THE MARKET-PLACE AT ATHENS

the splendid idolatrous temples. The people were very ready to talk with him, but they would not believe his words. 'Some said, What doth this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.'

At last they took him to a place called Areopagus, on Mars Hill, where trials were held and great speeches were often made, and there Paul spoke to them. He spoke of their many temples, and of an altar he had seen set up 'to the unknown god.' This unknown god he had come to tell them about, and then he told them about God and Jesus, and how Jesus had risen from the dead. When he said this, 'Some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.' Yet even in Athens Paul made a few disciples, a man named Dionysius, a woman named Damaris, and others. But for the most part the people of Athens thought themselves too wise and too rich and too happy to need the love and forgiveness of Jesus. And Jesus can and will bless only those who feel their need of Him, and who come to Him.

From Athens Paul went to Corinth, another famous Grecian city. Corinth was a great port, and there great numbers of people from many parts of the world came together. Paul stayed in Corinth a long time, and there came to him many new friends. Among these was a Jew named Aquila. This man had lived in Rome, and had come to Corinth, because the emperor, Claudius, would not allow Jews to live any longer in Rome. Aquila had a wife named Priscilla. He was a tentmaker. All Jews taught their children trades. So Paul, although he was a



PAUL ON MARS HILL

great scholar, had learned a trade. He had been taught how to make tents. This may teach us a lesson. To be able to work with the hands is very useful. It is also praised in the Bible: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;' 'If any will not work, neither let him eat.' Because they were of the same trade, Paul went to live with Aquila and Priscilla.

In this way Paul worked every week-day for his living. But on the Sabbath days he went to the synagogue and tried to persuade the Jews to believe on Jesus, and to love and serve Him. The Greeks were people who were Greeks by birth, and who had become Jews. By and by Silas and Timothy came to Corinth too, and helped Paul in this work. But the Jews in Corinth, as in many other places, did not like to hear about Jesus. So at last Paul shook his long outer garment, and said: 'Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.' He went to live with a man named Justus, whose house was very near the synagogue. But some of the Jews believed his words, among them Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and all his family. This man, Paul tells us in 1 Cor. i. 14, he baptized himself.

Altogether Paul stayed a year and six months in Corinth. All this time the Jews did what they could to hinder his work. The Roman deputy or governor of the province lived at Corinth. His name was Gallio. One day the wicked Jews made a great disturbance, and dragged Paul to the judgment-seat of Gallio, and said: 'This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.' But Gallio knew little, and cared nothing about



PAUL TENT-MAKING IN AQUILA'S HOUSE

the Jewish law. In the same way, when the chief priests brought Jesus before Pilate, he said to them: 'Am I a Jew?' meaning that he too cared nothing about merely Jewish matters. Pilate wanted to let Jesus go. Gallio would not listen to the Jews at Corinth. Those proud Roman governors little thought that their names would never have been known to millions of people had it not been for the fact that Jesus came before one of them, and Paul before the other.

At last Paul left Corinth, intending to go back to Antioch. He first visited Ephesus, and stayed there a short time. Then he sailed to Cæsarea, journeyed to Jerusalem, saw the disciples there, and so at last went back to Antioch. In this way Paul's long Second Missionary Journey came to an end.

CHAPTER X

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

PAUL did not remain a great while at Antioch. In the course of the year 54 A.D. he started on his Third Missionary Journey. He 'went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening the disciples.' At last he reached the great city of Ephesus, and there he resolved to stay a long time. Ephesus was the chief city of that part of the world. Strangers from all the countries of Asia and Europe came there. The

splendid temple of Diana, and the worship of that heathen goddess, brought great multitudes of people to Ephesus. For two whole years Paul lived there, working and preaching, 'so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.'

Many people in Ephesus, as at Corinth and Philippi and other places, believed in sorcery and witchcraft. Paul came to be so well known, and did so many wonders, that some of these wicked people, who thought he was only a stronger sorcerer than themselves, tried to make use of his power. One day the sons of a Jew named Sceva tried to drive evil spirits out of people by saying, 'We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.' The evil spirit replied: 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?' And then he leaped on them, and nearly killed them. God is very jealous of His honour. There is nothing more wicked than to try to do wrong things in the name of Jesus.

Now this terrible thing was much talked about in Ephesus. We are told 'it was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.'

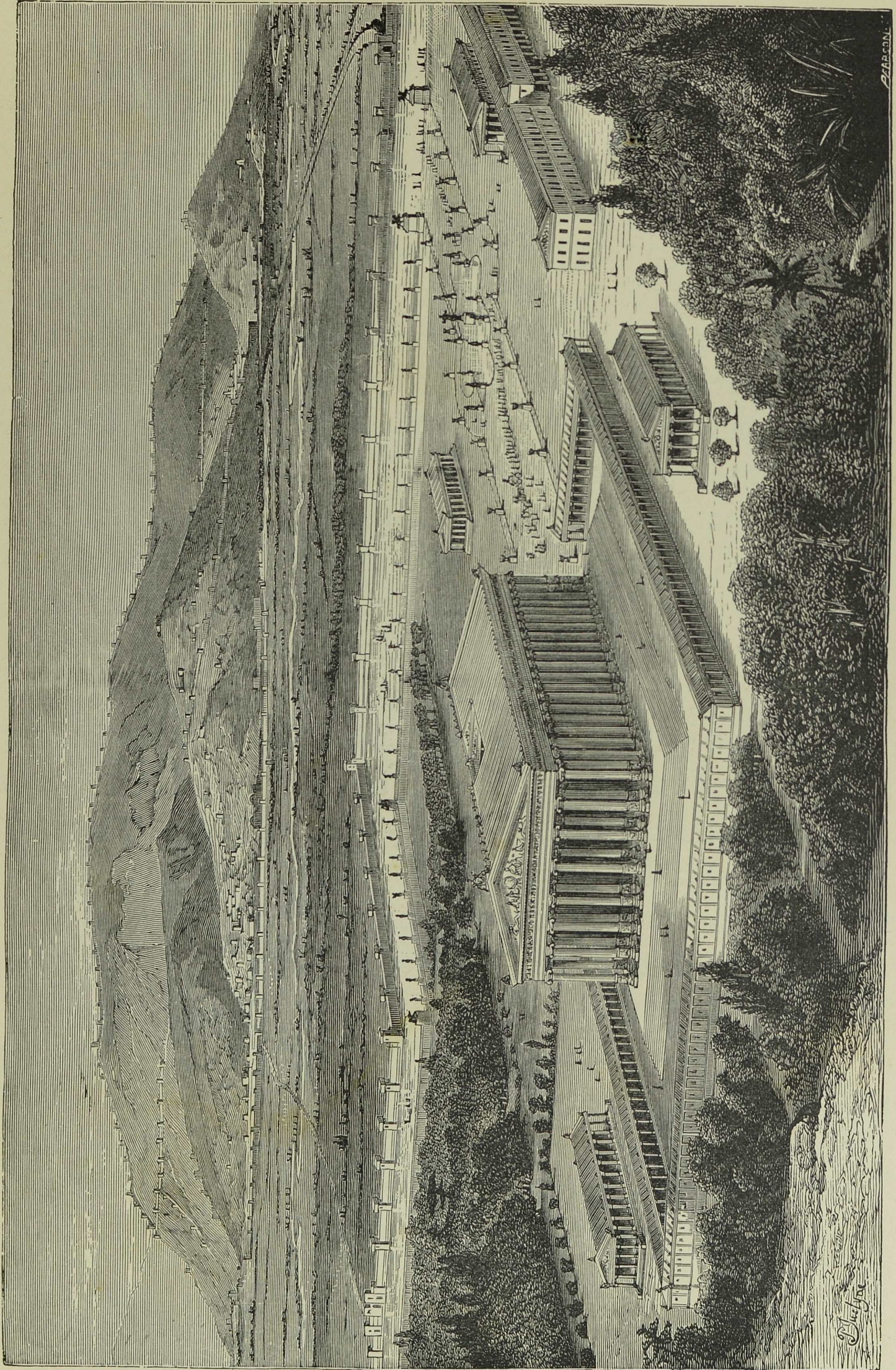
People do not like a new religion when it hurts their business. Paul's preaching of the gospel of Jesus led so

many to believe on Him that at last the worshippers of Diana began to be afraid. Paul both knew and taught that it was



THE PEOPLE OF EPHEBUS BURNING THEIR WICKED BOOKS

foolish and wicked to go to the great temple of Diana. Although great multitudes of people worshipped that goddess, Paul told the people that she did not live, that she could



ANCIENT EPHEBUS

do nothing for them, and that they might as well worship a stone. But the silversmiths of the city used to make very large numbers of copies in silver of the great temple. These they sold to the strangers who came to see Ephesus and its fine buildings. These men soon saw that if Paul had his way people would cease to believe in Diana, and would not want to buy any more silver shrines. As they made 'no small gain' out of these, they would lose a great deal of money. So one of them named Demetrius called many others together, and pointed this out to them. He told them that not only in Ephesus, but in all Asia, Paul had led many people to believe that there was only one God, that idols were not gods; and that if this were true, then the great temple of Diana would be destroyed, and all their living would be taken away.

When the silversmiths heard Demetrius talking in this way they became very angry, and they shouted out: 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' They seemed to think that if they only shouted these words loudly enough they would be able to prove that they were true. They seized two of Paul's friends, Gaius and Aristarchus by name, and dragged them into the great theatre where the games were held. When Paul heard of it, he wanted very much to go into the theatre and speak to the people. But his friends were afraid that the angry silversmiths would kill him. So they would not let him go. The theatre was full of people. All was confusion. No one could get a hearing, and the larger part of the crowd did not even know why they had come together. Many, seeing the crowd pressing into the building, had gone in without knowing why! And



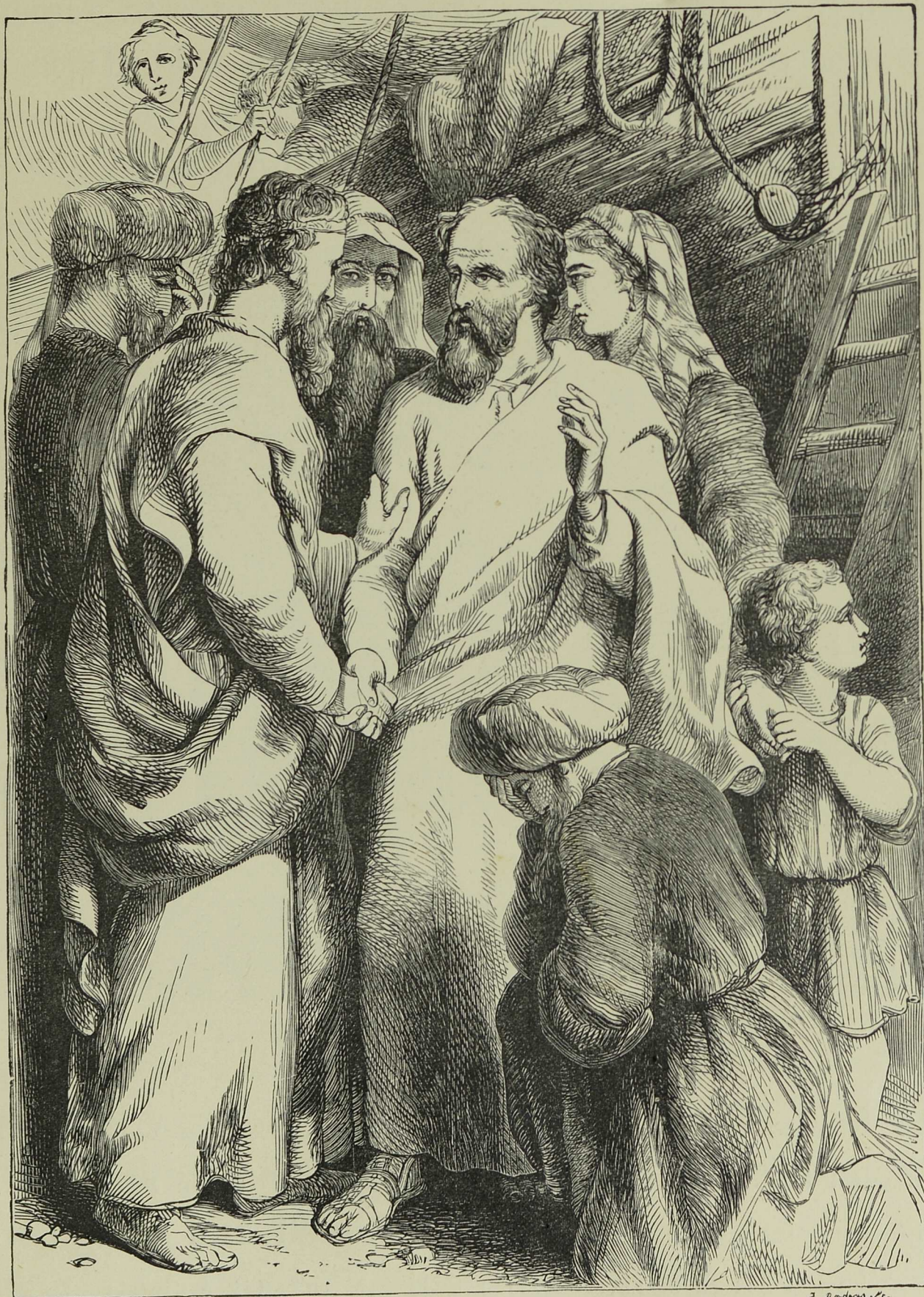
PAUL AT EPHEBUS

then for two hours the silly people shouted: 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' But no matter how loudly people shout, mere noise can never make a false thing true. Diana was a deaf, dumb, dead idol, and all that shouting proved only how foolish the silversmiths were.

At last when the crowd got very tired,—as they well might after two hours' noise,—the town-clerk spoke some sensible words. He said that everybody knew that Ephesus worshipped Diana, that the image in the great temple had fallen down from Jupiter; and that as these things were so, they ought to be quiet. As for Demetrius and his friends, if Paul had done anything wrong to them the courts were open, and the case ought to be tried there. In this way he quieted the meeting, and finally got the people to go home.

But Paul found it wiser to leave Ephesus for a time, and he travelled through Macedonia and then into Greece. Then he went again through Macedonia, and after visiting Philippi came to Troas. Sailing down the west coast of Asia, he came to Miletus. This was near Ephesus; but Paul wished to get soon to Jerusalem, and he knew that if he went among his friends at Ephesus he might be kept there a long while. So from Miletus he sent and asked some of his friends to come and see him. They were the elders of the church, and Paul had a long talk with them about their work, and the troubles that were coming upon them. He told them also that he did not think they would ever see him again. They were very sorry indeed to hear this, and they all knelt down together and prayed. Then they went with him to the ship, and bid him

good-bye. In his address Paul spoke to them some very beautiful words. He was afraid that they would find it



PAUL'S FAREWELL AT MILETUS

hard to be good Christians, and to serve and love Jesus among all the idolaters of the great city of Ephesus. But

he bade them be of good courage, and to remember his words. 'I have shewed you,' said he, 'how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

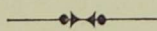
When the ship in which Paul and his friends were



PAUL PARTING FROM HIS DISCIPLES AT CAESAREA

sailing left Miletus, it went first to Coos, then to Rhodes, and then to Patara. At this place they took another ship and sailed to Tyre, where they landed and stayed seven days. Then in a third ship Paul sailed to Cæsarea, where he stayed for seven days at the house of Philip the evangelist. While there, a prophet named Agabus came down from Jerusalem and said that if Paul went to

Jerusalem he would be bound and imprisoned and handed over to the Romans. When Paul's friends heard this they were very sad. They did all they could to persuade Paul not to go to Jerusalem. But Paul was a very brave man. He was never afraid to go anywhere or to do anything if he felt it to be right. So he said: 'I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' Then his friends gave up trying to hinder him, and said: 'The will of the Lord be done.' So Paul left them and went up to Jerusalem, fully expecting that troubles of many kinds would come upon him.



CHAPTER XI

PAUL IN PRISON

SOON after Paul came to Jerusalem he went into the temple. In the great crowds which had come up to the Holy City from all parts of the world at the feast-time there were many who had seen and heard Paul in Asia. Some of these men took hold of him, and raised a great shouting, and said: 'This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place.' This was not true. Paul wanted them to believe on Jesus, and only so far as His service was better and truer than the old worship did Paul wish the Jews to change.

The temple courts were full of people, and as soon as

the men from Asia raised their shout, immense numbers rushed together around Paul. They dragged him out of the temple, and the doors were shut. Then they began to beat him, and were about to kill Paul. But at this time the Romans were masters of Jerusalem. And at one corner of the temple was a great tower where the chief Roman captain lived, and where a strong guard of Roman soldiers was always on duty. The captain hearing the uproar took some of his centurions and soldiers and ran down into the crowd and seized Paul and bound him with two chains, and asked who he was and whence he came. But the noise was so great, and so many spoke at once, that the captain could hear nothing. So his soldiers carried Paul up into the castle. Stairs led up from the temple to the castle; and the crowd, who were all shouting, 'Away with him,' was so great, and struggling so hard to hurt Paul, that the Roman soldiers had to carry him up the stairs.

But when Paul got to the top of the stairs he asked the captain to let him speak to the people. The captain gave Paul leave, and then Paul turned to the huge angry crowd and made signs that he wished to speak to them. He spoke in Hebrew; and when the people heard him speaking their own language, they all became very quiet. Paul made a speech. This speech gives, in his own words, the story of Paul's life, and so we quote it here.

'Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to



PAUL ON THE STAIRS AT JERUSALEM

the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And I answered, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto 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, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast

seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: and when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.'

The great crowd listened very quietly until Paul said that God had told him to go and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. You remember that the Jews hated the Gentiles, and did not like to think that God loved them as well as Jews. So when they heard this, they tore their clothes and threw dust into the air. That is the way people behave in the East when they are very angry. And they screamed out, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live.'

The Roman captain, who could not understand Hebrew, and so did not know what Paul had been saying, then told his soldiers to take Paul into the castle and beat him. The Romans thought that by treating prisoners in this cruel way they would make them speak the truth about themselves. But here again Paul's Roman citizenship was very useful to him. He said to the centurion whose duty it was to punish him,

‘Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?’ The centurion at once went to the chief captain, and said: ‘Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.’ So the chief captain came to him at once, and said: ‘With a great sum obtained I this freedom.’ Paul said: ‘But I was free-born.’ Those who had just been going to beat Paul were sent away,



PAUL BEFORE THE COUNCIL

and he was made as comfortable as possible for the night in the castle.

The next day the chief captain ordered the great council of the Jews, called the Sanhedrin, to meet. Then he brought Paul down to defend himself before them. This council was made up of priests and great men.

Some of them had helped to kill Jesus and Stephen. Some of them in old days had been the friends of Paul himself. Part of them were Pharisees, who did believe that there was a life after death. Part were Sadducees, who said: 'There is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit.' When Paul saw this, he cried out: 'I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.' Then the two parties began to quarrel. The Pharisees wished to let Paul go; the Sadducees wished to punish him. At last, to save him from being torn in pieces, the Roman captain had to send his soldiers in, and again take Paul away by force.

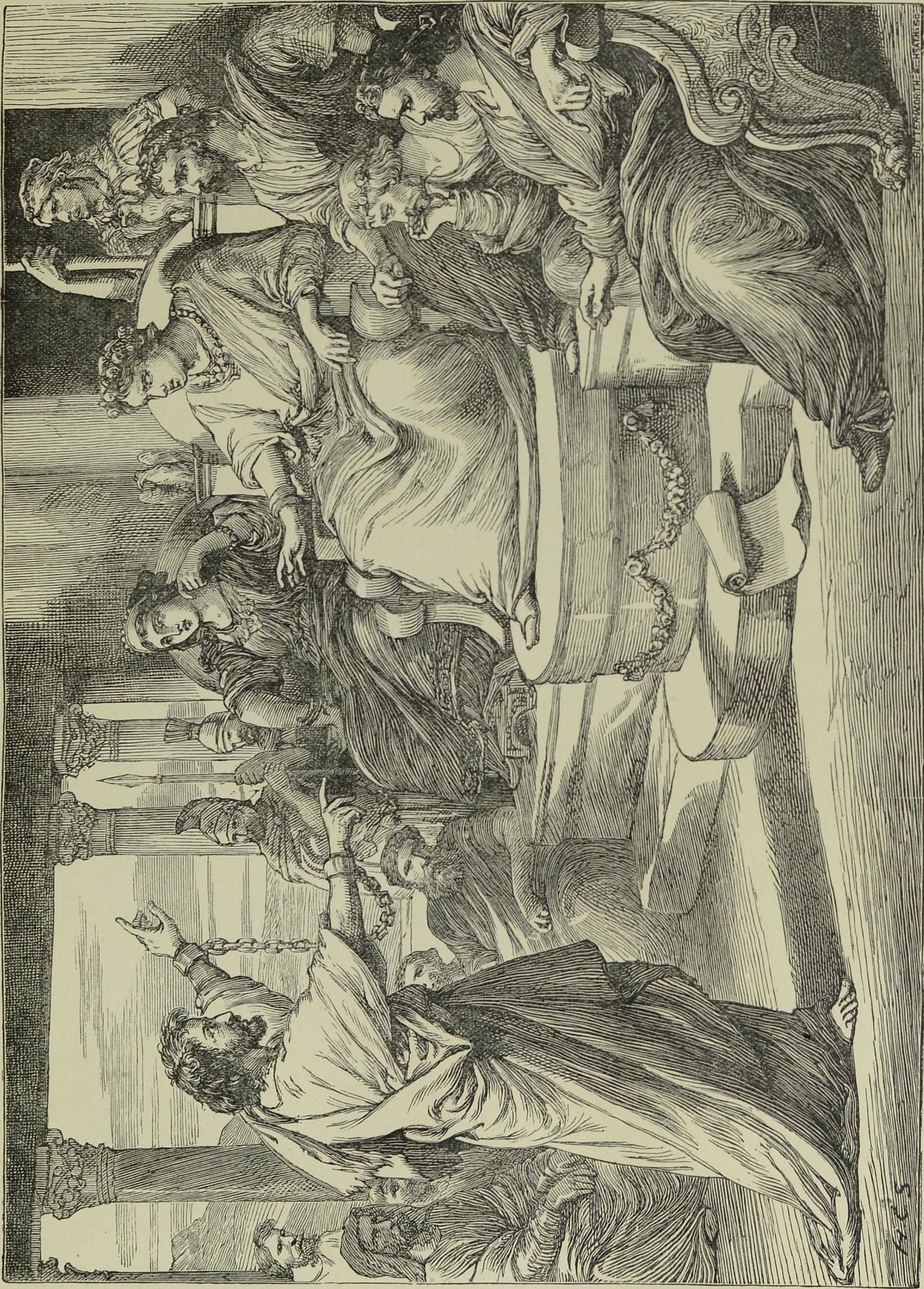
Then just as years ago in Damascus, so now in Jerusalem, some of the Jews took a wicked vow, and said they would eat nothing until they had killed Paul. The Roman captain was told of this. So he ordered two centurions to get ready with 200 soldiers, and 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen, at three o'clock in the morning, and march off to Cæsarea with Paul. Felix, the governor of the Roman province of Judæa, lived at Cæsarea. So to him the captain sent Paul. Then he told his accusers that they must go to Felix and get him to do what they wished.

The Roman captain sent a letter to Felix, and this lets us see the kind of letters which Roman soldiers often had to write on matters of business. It runs: 'Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and

rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.//

Ananias, the high priest, and others came to Felix and tried to get him to punish Paul. But Felix knew very well that Paul had done nothing wrong. Yet, like Pilate with Jesus, Felix wanted to please the Jews.

At last, on a set day when Drusilla his wife was sitting by him, Paul explained to him what he believed, what he taught, and why the Jews hated him. Felix was a very wicked man. Paul knew this; and he spoke so earnestly about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, that Felix turned pale and trembled. But he would not do right, and let Paul go. He said: 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.' Ah! but that convenient season never came. If Felix had done *then* what Paul told him, he would have been saved, like the gaoler at Philippi. The Bible tells us the only right time to act is *now*. 'Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.' Felix, like Pilate, lost his opportunity. And although he often talked with Paul afterwards, he did it only in the hope that Paul would pay money to be set free. This, of course, Paul would not do.



PAUL BEFORE FELIX

At the end of two years Felix ceased to be governor. His place was taken by a Roman named Festus. When Festus went to Jerusalem, the priests asked him to send for Paul. Had he done so, they would have tried again to kill him. But Festus said that they must come to Cæsarea. They did; and then Festus, wishing to please the Jews, asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem. Paul refused; but seeing that Festus was likely to order him to go there, he used the last power he possessed. Any Roman citizen who was being tried could, if he wished, say, 'I appeal to Cæsar.' When he had once spoken these words, no matter where he was, he had to be sent to Rome, and he could be tried only by the great emperor himself. So Paul said: 'I appeal unto Cæsar.' Festus was angry, but he could not help himself. He consulted his council, and then he said: 'Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.'

But before Paul went, King Agrippa and his wife Bernice came to see Festus. Agrippa was a Jew, and knew all about Jewish matters. Festus did not. So Festus asked Agrippa if he would like to hear Paul, and then he could tell Festus what he ought to write about Paul to the emperor. On a set day Paul was brought before Festus and Agrippa, and made a great speech, given in the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts. At the end of it they both agreed that Paul had done nothing wrong, and Agrippa said he might have been set free had he not appealed unto Cæsar.



PAUL BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA

CHAPTER XII

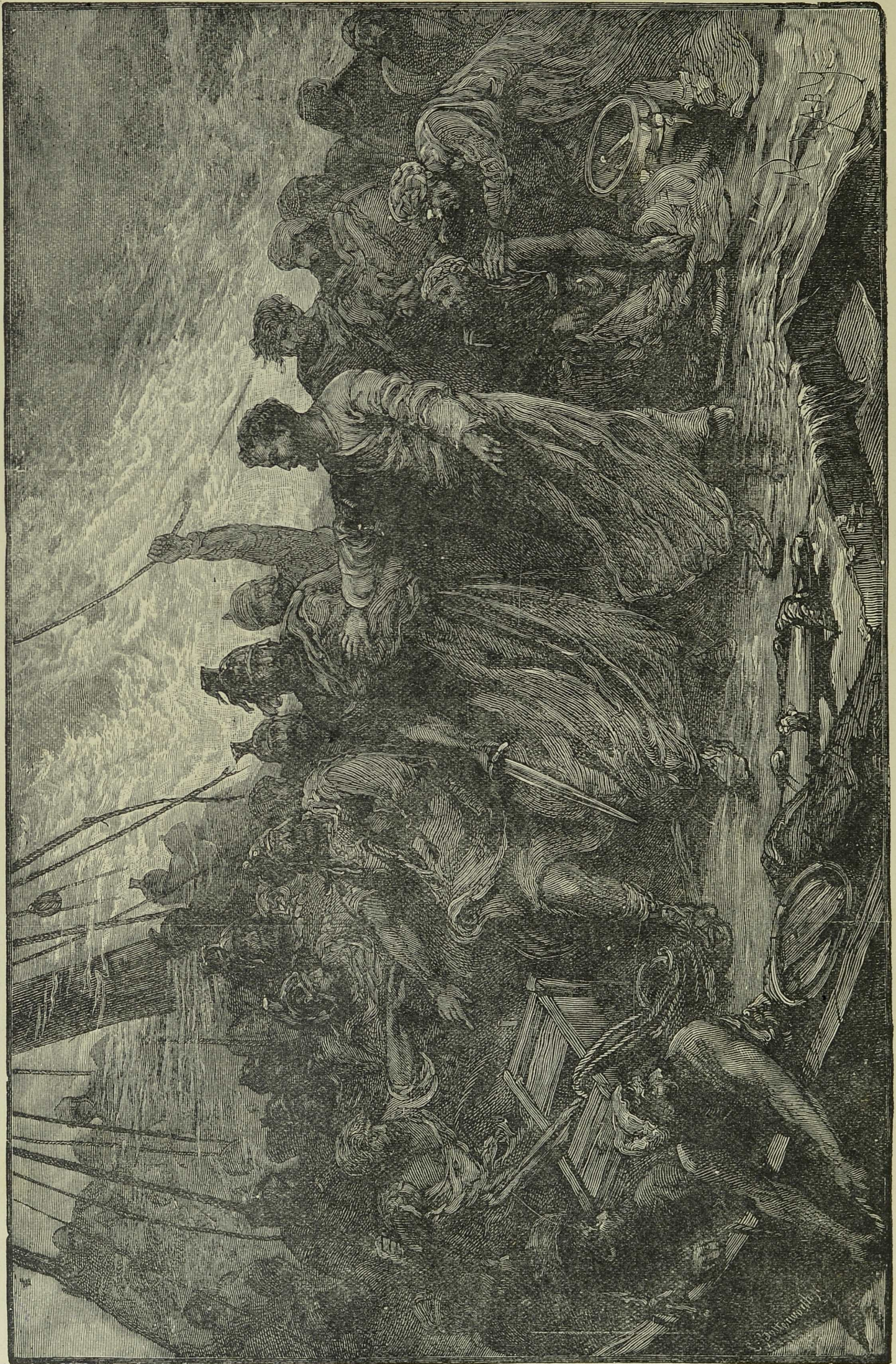
PAUL'S SHIPWRECK

PAUL had long wished to go to Rome. He little thought that his first visit would be as a Roman prisoner. But God often gives His servants what they wish in ways very different from what they expect. Festus ordered a centurion named Julius to take charge of Paul, and carry him to Rome. From Jerusalem the easiest way to Rome was by water. But in those days the ships were small, and the sailors had no compass, and they did not like to go far from the land. So at first they sailed 'by the coasts of Asia,' past Cyprus, over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, to Myra, a city of Lycia. There Julius found a vessel from Alexandria going on to Italy. They got as far as Crete, to a place called Fair Havens. It was now winter, the time when sailing in the Mediterranean Sea was dangerous for such vessels. What followed can best be told in Bible words, as they stand in the Revised Version.

'And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives. But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to

winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phœnix, and winter there; which is a haven of Crete, looking north-east and south-east. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore. But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo: and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and were driven. And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, under-girding the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven. And as we laboured exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard; and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship.

‘And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs,



PAUL IN THE SHIPWRECK

be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

‘But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country; and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms: and after a little space, they sounded again, and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and wished for the day. And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would lay out anchors from the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I beseech you to take some food; for this is for your safety; for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all: and he brake it, and began to eat.

‘Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the

land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it. And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea,



PAUL AT MELITA

at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But lighting upon a place where two seas met,

they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmoveable, but the stern began to break up by the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land: and the rest, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.'

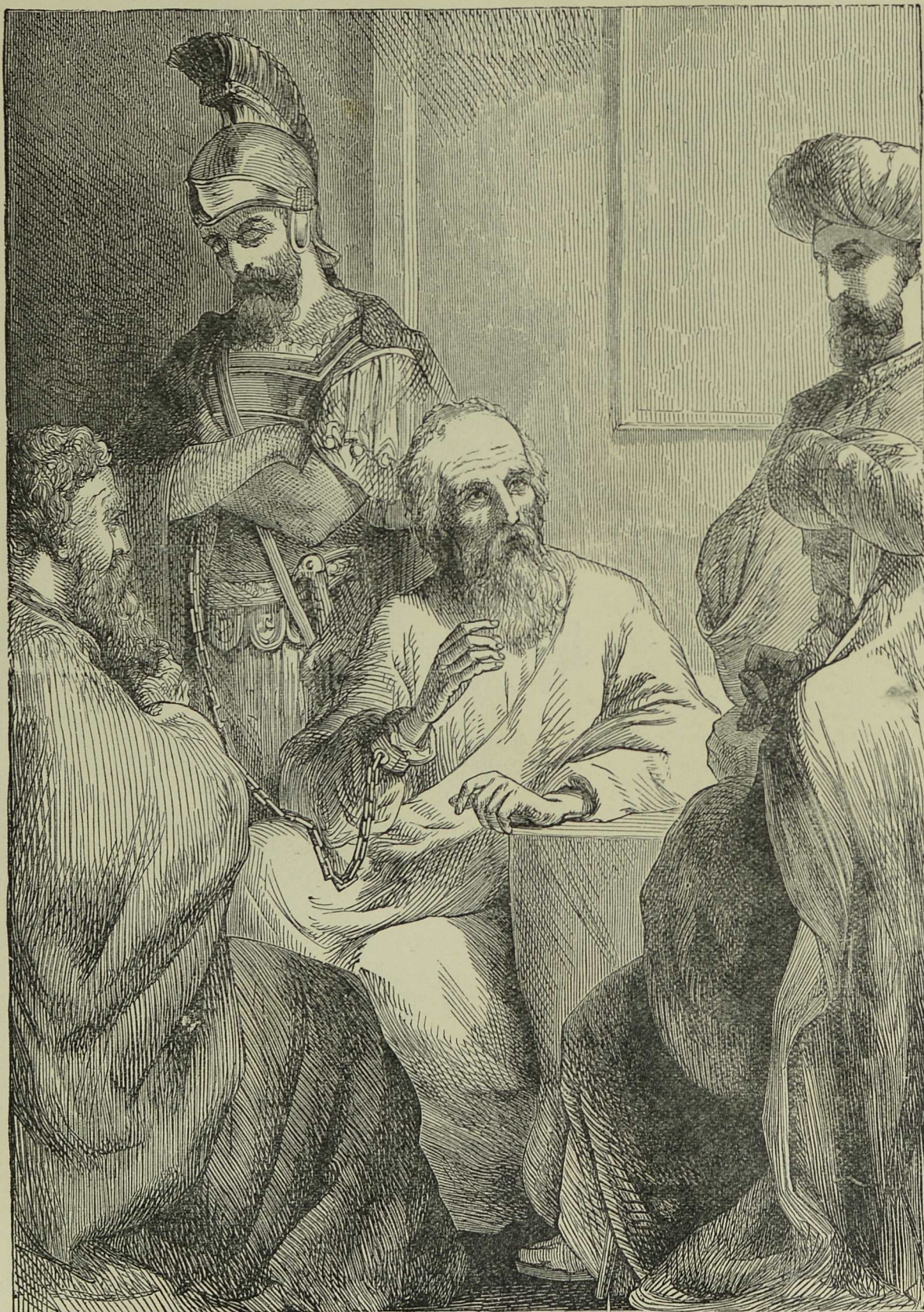
The island on which they had thus been cast was called Melita, and is in all probability that now called Malta. The first thing to do was to make a big fire by which they could dry themselves, and cook their food. Paul helped in this work. He gathered sticks and cast them on the fire. As he did so, a viper sprang out of the sticks and bit his hand. The people of the island thought at first he was a very wicked man. They said: 'Though he had escaped the sea, the gods do not suffer him to live.' For they knew the snake was poisonous, and they thought Paul would soon fall down dead. But Paul shook it off into the fire, and was none the worse. Then 'they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.'

Paul and Julius and their company stayed three months at Melita. The chief man of the island was named Publius. He was very kind to all the shipwrecked people. Paul, too, was able to heal the father of Publius of a fever. In the spring, a ship from Alexandria, called the Castor and Pollux, which had wintered at Melita, took



PAUL ENTERING ROME

them all on board, and after calling at Syracuse, and passing Rhegium, they came to Puteoli, where they landed.



S. GROVES. DEL.

F. BORDERS. SC.

PAUL PREACHING TO THE JEWS IN HIS LODGINGS AT ROME

Thence they went on foot to Rome. There Julius handed all his prisoners over to the captain of the guard. 'But



PAUL WRITING HIS LETTERS AT ROME

Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.'

Paul had been only three days in Rome when he asked the chief Jews to come and see him. He had many long talks with them; but he found in Rome, as in so many other places, 'some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.'

It was more than two years before the emperor would try Paul's case. Nero, one of the most wicked men that ever lived, was on the throne. The Acts tells us nothing more about Paul. But we know that while he was a prisoner there he wrote the Epistles to the Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, and Ephesians. It is believed that at his first trial he was set free. Then he travelled about visiting the churches he had begun, and starting new ones. At last he was arrested again, sent to Rome, and there beheaded. According to some this took place in the year 68, while others think it was in 66.

We should have liked to know much more about Paul. But the Bible never tells facts just for the sake of telling them. The Acts begins with the story of how Jesus wished the disciples to go about preaching the gospel to all men. It tells us how this was done first in Jerusalem, next in Samaria, then over all Asia, and at last in mighty Rome, the great capital of the world. Ever since, all who have truly loved Jesus have tried to obey His great word: 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them

to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.'



PAUL'S LAST IMPRISONMENT AT ROME

TBC(B) for
STORIES FROM



37131 054 904 636

