

**military custody** at the Judgment Hall in Casarea; but has been treated with some indulgence, especially in the matter of intercourse with his friends (see last lesson). Of this period in the apostle's history, cut off, as it was, from active and unrestrained work for the Master, Dean Howson says: "Nor need we assume that his active exertions for others were entirely suspended. "The care of all the churches" might still be resting on him; many messages and even letters, of which we know nothing, may have been sent from Casarea to brethren at a distance. And a plausible conjecture fixes this period and place for the writing of St. Luke's Gospel, under the superintendence of the Apostle of the Gentiles." Some have thought that Paul wrote here Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon, but they were more probably written from Rome.

During this time a quarrel arose between Casarea and the Jews and the Gentile population, which grew so serious that the troops were called out, and both slaughter and plunder was the result. Felix was recalled to Rome to answer the charge of conniving at the massacre, and the Jews followed him with their accusations. "Thus it was that he was anxious, even at his departure, 'to confer obligations upon them' (xxiv, 27), and one effort to diminish his unpopularity 'to love Paul in bonds.'"—*Companion and Helper*.

The new Governor, **Porcus Festus**, was a far better man than Felix. He seems to have been endowed with true Roman firmness, and a disposition to conciliate as far as consistent with justice.

His very first step on coming to his province was to make himself acquainted with the habits and politics of his subjects; and so "three days" after his arrival at Casarea, he "went up to Jerusalem." Here he was immediately approached by "the high priest and the chief of the Jews who informed him against Paul, and besought him, and desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, saying 'lay us in the way to kill him.'"—Acts xv, 2, 3. "So bitter and so enduring was their hatred against the apostate Pharisee. The answer which he dignified and just, and worthy of his office. He said that Paul was in custody at Casarea, and that he himself was shortly to return thither (xxv, 4), adding, that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up an uncondemned person as a mere favour upon an uncondemned and destitute of face, and full opportunity must be given for a defence (xxv, 16)." Festus only remained eight or ten days in Jerusalem; and the day after his return to Casarea the trial came on. The charges were wild, vehement and destitute of proof, referring (as on the occasion before Felix) to *heresy, sacrilege and treason*. Festus was evidently surprised at the case and felt there was no good ground for Paul's further detention. However, being anxious to conciliate the Jews, and being unaware of their sinister designs upon the apostle's life, he asked Paul if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried there "before me" (Festus). But Paul knew far better than Festus the intention of the Jews to assassinate him; and so he accepted the only course that would save him, and claimed the Roman citizen's right of *appeal unto Cesar*.—xxv, 11. This terminated the case so far as Festus and the Jews were concerned, and the Governor was obliged to transfer the cause, as soon as possible, to the supreme tribunal at Rome. But Festus was still in great perplexity as to what should be the character of his dispatch to the Emperor about the case: for the charges made were only of the most vague and unsatisfactory character, and it seemed to him "unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not willing to signify the crimes laid against him" (xxv, 27). But just at this crisis **Herod Agrippa II**, king of Chalcis, who was familiar with Jewish law, and was at that very time superintendent of the Temple, came with his sister Bernice to pay his respects to the new Governor; and Festus was only too glad of the opportunity to consult one so "expert in

all the customs and questions which are among the Jews" (v. 3). Paul was brought before him in 23, and after some explanatory remarks from Festus (xxv, 23-27), Agrippa very contentedly said to Paul: "Thou art permitted to speak for thyself" (xxvi, 1). After a few appropriate words by way of introducing the apostle comes, in the words of our lesson, to the Jewish "hope" respecting the Messiah, and his own relations, formerly and now, to that hope.

#### EXPLANATORY.

**V. 6. The hope of the promise.** All Jews hoped for and looked for the coming of the Messiah, as their Scriptures taught them; for example—Gen. iii, 15; xlix, 10; Deut. xviii, 15; 1 Sam. ix, 10; Job xix, 25-27; Psalm xiv, 1-17; Isaiah li, 1-3; Dan. ix, 24-26, &c.

**V. 7. Our twelve tribes**—the whole Jewish nation. Though ten of the tribes were scattered and lost, it was a point of the national faith that the whole nation would be reunited under the Messiah.—See James i, 1. Instantly—intently, earnestly, eagerly. Hope to come. The difference between Paul and the Jews was "that his hope had found rest in One already come, while theirs still pointed to the future."—*David Brown*. For which hope's sake. I am accused of the Jews. The last people in the world who should have found faith with him for that hope.

**V. 8. Why should it be thought incredible**, that God should raise the dead? The belief in the resurrection held by all the Pharisees, and was probably by Agrippa, removed one great obstacle to the reception of the true question respecting the Messiah. "Leaving this pregnant question to find its own answer in the breasts of his audience, Paul now passes to his personal history."—*David Brown*.

**V. 9. I verily thought**—being possessed of a spirit of incredulity, like that of others—that I ought to do. "This same act in which Paul gloried at the time, appeared to him as the crime of his life after he became a Christian."—*Hackett*, see 1 Cor. xv, 9. Read also Acts vii, 1-3; ix, 1, 2, xxi, 4, 5.

**V. 10. When they were put to death.** From this it seems that Stephen was not the only martyr in whose death Paul had a part.

**V. 11. Compelled**—not that he did actually succeed in this, but as the tense in Greek means, he was *endeavouring to compel*.

**V. 12-20, &c.** Compare the parallel passages in Acts ix and xxii.

#### PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. God is always faithful to His promises; in the fulness of the times the promised Messiah came.—v. 6, 7.
2. "Sincerity is not a test of truth; nor does it prove us accepted of God. We may be sincerely wrong as well as sincerely right."—*Ridley*, v. 9.
3. "We should distrust our convictions, if they lead us to hate or injure our fellow-men: for 'the wisdom that cometh from above is first pure, and then peaceable.' We are only safe when love to God manifests itself in love to man."—*F. C. Cook*, v. 10, 11.
4. Conversion is not always to be looked for under what appear *unusually* the most favourable conditions. That of Paul, occurring at the time and in the manner that it did, should encourage us not to despair of the salvation of the most desperate and obstinate characters.—v. 12, 13.
5. Those who persecute Christ's disciples persecute Christ.—v. 14, 15. Compare Zech. ii, 8; Matt. xxv, 40, 45.
6. Man's state *by nature* is one of darkness, and bondage to Satan; his state *by grace* is one of light, liberty, and the liberty of the children of God. With the blessed change he receives "forgiveness of sins and inheritance among

them which are sanctified," not as a reward of his own merit, but through the merits of Christ whom he has accepted "by faith."—v. 18.

7. Living faith manifests itself in loving obedience. Paul began to work for Christ in Damascus, just where he intended to work the hardest against Him. "Precisely where we may have given the greatest offence we should begin to remove it."—*Starke*, v. 19, 20.

## Religious Intelligence.

### DENOMINATIONAL.

#### ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

**Baptisms** reported since last month.—*Alton Craig*, 1; *Almonte*, 1; *Boston*, 1; *Brantford*, 3; *Chatham*, 1; *Chatsworth*, 3; *Cheley*, 5; *Clareville*, 2; *Cowardin*, 1; *Georgetown*, 1; *King's Forest*, 1; *Gananoque*, 2; *Grand Hill*, 30; *Kincardine*, 10; *Montreal*, Olivet, 9; *Riceville*, 9; *St. Andrew*, 5; *Sidney*, 1; *Somerley*, 1; *South Arthur*, 1; *Thurso*, 14; *Toronto*, Jarvis St., 5; *Whitby*, 2; *Wingham*, 2.

**Pastoral Changes**.—Rev. D. McNeill has removed from Paisley to Stayner, to minister to the Stayner and Cremore churches. Rev. John Cameron has removed from Almonte and become pastor of the church in Chesley. Rev. W. H. Walker has removed from Stirling to Campbellford and takes charge of the Seymour church. Rev. W. Ward Willis, late of Jackson, Pa., has become pastor of the Springfield and Mount Elgin churches. Rev. John Stuart, late of Watford, has accepted the call of the church at Hartford, Ont. Rev. L. F. Denchfield, late of Palmerston, is now pastor of the church in Burlington (late Wellington Square). Rev. W. Prester has resigned the pastorate of the Lindsay and Ops churches. Rev. H. Richmond has resigned the pastorate of the Arkona and Theford churches. Rev. Robert Ross, late pastor of Glanmisk and Tiverton, has accepted the call of the churches in Port Elgin and Burgoyne. Rev. A. McFadden, of Fullerton, has accepted the unanimous call of the Glanmisk and Tiverton churches.

Rev. Eli Povey has been ordained to the gospel ministry, and has settled as pastor of the church in Sherbrooke, Ont.

**Churches Organized**.—The Kinnouan Baptist church, with 17 members, on the 10th of September; and the Gananoque Baptist church, on the 15th of September, with 12 constituent members.

**Chapel Dedicated**.—The East Zorra Baptist chapel, on Lord's Day, October 7th, with appropriate services.

#### MARITIME PROVINCES.

**Baptisms** reported since last month.—*Bathurst Ridge*, N.B., 11; *Derby*, N.B., 2; *Covello Point*, N.B., 1; *Jacksonton*, N.B., 8; *Newcastle*, N.B., (No. not given).

**Acadia College Endowment**.—Rev. R. D. Porter, agent for New Brunswick, and Rev. J. Wallace, agent for Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, are meeting with gratifying success in their canvass on behalf of this very desirable object.

**Miscellaneous**.—Rev. J. D. Pope, who is now in England soliciting aid towards the rebuilding of German St. and Leinster St. churches, St. John, is encouraged by a fair amount of success.

The foundation stone of the new German St. church was laid on Tuesday, October 2nd.

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**.—We are informed that since the formation of the P. E. I. Associa-