

Demetrius. So the opposition to the temperance reform comes from those who have moneyed interests in the rum traffic; the publishers of vicious literature are enraged by the efforts of societies for the suppression of vice, etc.

3. *Persecution often uses a popular cry as its watchword.* "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" was the war cry then. Start a current of popular feeling and, baseless as it may seem or be, the result may be great—sometimes destructive. The anti-Christian riots in England of two centuries ago, the anti-Jewish riots in Europe of to-day, are instances of this principle.

4. *Persecution is generally ignorant and unthinking.* "The more part knew not wherefore they were come together." "Kill them all!" shouted a cardinal during the persecution of the Albigenses, "the Lord will know his own."

5. *Persecution should be met by courage.* Notice Paul's conduct. Against the advice of his friends he was ready and eager to adventure himself in the theater. We remember how his words quelled a worse mob in the temple and won their attention. But God's providence controlled the counsels of his friends, and all came out for the best.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

It is very common among the heathen of various portions of the East to use small images of gods, specially in the ceremonies of household worship. In Buddhist countries, as Japan and China, these are frequently inclosed in ornate cases with folding doors to secure them from dust, which are opened during the ceremonies connected with their worship. They are of wood, or of gold, or of silver, or of clay, and are generally made in close imitation of the larger figures found in the temples. They are not uncommonly carried in processions or on journeys or military expeditions. Their manufacture is extensive and lucrative. As the goddess Diana was very popular, and immense concourses of people gathered at Ephesus to participate in her worship, the images alluded to as "silver shrines for Diana" in the twenty-fourth verse were widely in demand, and the arrest of these sales would interfere with what had become in the course of many years a very important industry in the city. The original image was so rude that it required comparatively little artistic skill to produce a very fair representation of it. It was believed to have fallen from heaven and was the object of great veneration. Its artistic merit was in very strong contrast to the splendor of the temple in which it was placed, which was four hundred and twenty-five feet in length, two hundred and twenty feet in breadth, and was supported by one hundred and twenty-seven columns, sixty feet high, each the gift of a king, thirty-six of which were enriched both with color and metal. Its folding doors were of cypress wood.

Part of it was roofed with cedar, and the staircase is said to have been formed of the wood of a single vine from the Island of Cyprus. It was the depository of a large portion of the wealth of western Asia. The temple alluded to in this chapter was built in the reign of Alexander the Great. It was the rallying-point of heathenism in the days of St. John and Polycarp, and anything that derogated against this popularity would kindle the most angry enthusiasm, as it did in the case of St. Paul. All the Greek cities of Asia contributed to the structure, and artists of highest distinction were occupied on it. There were mysterious letters on the crown, the girdle, and the feet of the goddess, a sort of monogram, which were supposed to exercise a great charm over evil spirits when pronounced. The study of these became an elaborate science, and books numerous and costly were compiled about them. Diana was more honored, probably, than any other deity, and her worship was adopted in various and distant places.

By Way of Illustration.

Paul at Ephesus The primary duty of the Christian is to bring as many as he can to the knowledge of the truth. What pains are taken to let a man know that he has fallen heir to an inheritance! Messengers will search for him all over the world to bring him as speedily as possible into the enjoyment of his good fortune. Paul found a similar but higher employment as soon as Jesus revealed himself at Damascus. Henceforth he could say, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!" Woe, indeed! For think of the numberless souls helped by Paul from that day to this! —*Bushnell.*

Paul's converts at Ephesus. If the orations of Demosthenes are a monument of the intellectual greatness of the Greece which listened to them with pleasure; if the plays of Shakespeare be a testimony to the strength of mind of the Elizabethan age which could enjoy such solid fare in a place of entertainment; then the Epistle to the Ephesians, which scales the loftiest heights of Christian experience, is a testimony to the proficiency which Paul's converts had attained under his preaching at Ephesus.—*Stalker.*

Verses 24-27. Who can tell what may be done by one man? Demetrius, an enemy, gave testimony on this point when, through Paul's influence, trade was slipping out of his fingers. "Ye see," he said, "that not alone at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia, this Paul turneth away much people." Not ten thousand Pauls, but one little man, shaking all Asia.—*Parker.*

Covetousness. Covetousness, the worship of mammon, always tries to hinder the progress of truth. Demetrius belongs in the company with