

EPICURÆAN SENTIMENTS.

The following were some of the chief points of their system:—1. That the universe was formed by the concurrence of indivisible atoms which had existed from eternity. 2. To the souls of men they ascribed no higher origin than to the material universe. 3. The idea of a future life was not cherished by them. 4. They believed in the existence of a higher order of beings than man, whom they called gods; yet they considered these beings as wholly indifferent to this world, and to the interests of the human race. 5. Their most distinguishing sentiment was, perhaps, that man's highest good consists in his personal happiness; and that virtue is to be pursued and vice shunned, not for their own sakes so much as for their influence on man's happiness.—*Ridley*.

STOICAL SENTIMENTS.

The moral principles of this school were of a high order. They included: 1. Indifference to pain or suffering. 2. Inordinate pride. 3. A belief in fate as the controlling power of the universe, and that even the gods were subject to it. 4. They conceived the essence of God to be fire, diffused throughout the universe, and the souls of men to have proceeded from that original fire, and to be destined to vanish away by returning to it, or being absorbed in it. 5. Their sentiments, however, were not fixed and uniform with regard to the condition of the human soul hereafter; but none of them had any clear idea of the real immortality of the soul.—*Ridley*.
Notice, in Paul's address, how he recognises these different systems of philosophy, and his manner of dealing with them.

THEME: The One Only God.

- I. GOD THE CREATOR.—v. 22-26.
- V. 24.—Made the world and all things therein.—Their most profound philosophy were unable to conceive any real distinction between God and the universe.—*Brown*. Dwell-leth not, &c.—see Acts vii, 48; 1 Kings xv, 27; John iv, 24.
- V. 25.—Worshipped—minister—under served—Job xxii, 2. Needed any thing—that is, anything more; Psalm i, 9-14. Seeing he, &c.—for He himself giveth, &c. (see v. 28) And all things—Rom. xi, 36; 1 Cor. xiv, 17.
- V. 26.—Of one blood—or from one blood—see Gen. ix, 10; Mal. ii, 10.
2. GOD THE RULER.—v. 26-28.
- V. 26.—Determined the times—fixed the appointed seasons; Ps. xlii, 15; Job xiv, 5; Dent. xxxii, 7-8. Before, profound philosophy were unable to conceive any real distinction between God and the universe.—*Brown*. Dwell-leth not, &c.—see Acts vii, 48; 1 Kings xv, 27; John iv, 24.
- V. 27.—That they should seek—Acts xv, 17; Jer. xxiii, 13. Not far from—see Jer. xxiii, 14.
- V. 28.—Certain also of your own poets—or, certain of the poets among yourselves. The words quoted are from Aratus, a Ciceronian poet, who flourished about c. 270. And the celebrated "Hymn to Jupiter," by Cleanthes, a famous Stoic professor at Athens, contemporary with Aratus, contains almost the same words:—"For from thee we are the offspring,"—*Hackett*. His offspring—see Matt. vi, 9; Heb. xii, 9; Nims. xvi, 29; Eccles. xii, 17. Attention to see 13. God, viz. FATHER, v. 23-25.
- V. 29.—We ought not—in this way Paul softens the rebuke by connecting himself with them. Offspring, (see above). Godhead is like—Isaiah xli, 18; xlv, 5. Graven by art and man's device—art, outward; device, inward.
- V. 30.—Times of this ignorance—see chap. xv, 16. Winked at—overlooked, chap. xv, 16; Rom. ii, 25; Psalm i, 9. New commandments—Lev. xii, 5; Titus, ii, 11-14. Got the judgment, v. 31.

V. 31.—Hath appointed a day

ii, 5, 16; 2 Peter iii, 7; Jude 6, 15. He will judge. When Paul uttered these words he was standing on the Areopagus, the seat of Athenian justice. "Aply is this uttered on the Areopagus, the seat of judgment."—*Bengel*. In righteousness—in justice, Acts ii, 41; 25. Ordained—chosen as Judge; see chap. x, 42. Given assurance... In that he raised &c.—see v. 18; chap. iii, 15; xiii, 32; Luke xxiv, 46-47; Rom. xiv, 12.

THIRTEEN RESULTS OF PAUL'S SERMON.—

V. 32.—Some mocked—see chap. xxi, 8; ii, 13. Others said, we will hear thee again—chap. xxiv, 25; Luke xiv, 18; Heb. iii, 7, 8.

V. 34.—Certain men clave... believed.

We are not informed how long Paul staid at Athens, or of any further labors there; and we have no letter written by him to the Athenians, as we have to the Thessalonians and the Corinthians.

SEPT. 2.—Paul at Corinth—Acts xviii; 1-11

A.D. 52-54.

DIEBEN READINGS.

Monday. Paul a tent-maker—Acts xxi, 1-11.
Tuesday. A man a shepherd—Matt. ix, 11; iii, 1.
Wednesday. David a shepherd—1 Sam. xvii, 13-28.
Thursday. Eliah a farmer—1 Ki. xii, 8-21.
Friday. Apostles fishermen—Matt. iv, 1-10.
Saturday. Matthew a tax-gatherer—Matt. ix, 1-17.
Sunday. Christ a carpenter—Mark vi, 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.—Rom. xii, 11.

INTRODUCTION.

Draw a brief word-picture of Paul the apostle. (v. 5) depressed in spirits at the apathy of the Athenians (chap. xvi, 22-40), and probably in straitened circumstances, (chap. xvii, 2, 3), leaving Athens, the great centre of literature and refinement, and journeying south-west again, some forty-five miles, to Corinth, the great centre of commerce. Attention should be directed to the situation of Corinth on the map. Placed on the isthmus, it had the advantage of two ports—one, Cenchrea, being on the east side, the other, Læthœum, on the west. Its situation made it a great commercial centre. The population of such a city would be made up of many kinds of people—sailors, foreigners, commercial travellers, merchant princes, the luxurious, the profligate, &c. There would be parties there too, (see 1 Cor. i, 12-13). Corinth also was an important centre from which the gospel, once introduced favorably, would radiate to all points of the then commercial world.

Arrived in Corinth, he gave the great Apostle searching for employment, and finding it in a "trade," which he began to conduct. Every Jew was compelled to learn, no matter what might be their social position. Paul's trade was that of a "tent maker," and while he "wrought" in the tent-making on week days, he was reasoning in the synagogue on Sabbath, and persuading the Jews and the Greeks. (v. 3-4). Then when these proved the testimony that Jesus was Christ—he left them to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, being hospitably received at the home of a Jew, Jesus, near by. Here the Lord himself, in a vision, speaks words of comfort and cheer to this depressed servant, and to exhort him to persevere.

In this lesson we have

I. PAUL LABOURING.—v. 1-5.

1. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

2. AT AQUILA.—v. 3-5.

3. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

4. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

5. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

6. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

7. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

8. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

9. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

10. FOR HIMSELF.—v. 1-3.

self the means of their conversion, is uncertain. Pontus.—See Acts i, 9; 1 Peter i, 1. Claudius—that is, Claudius Cæsar, the Roman Emperor, who had recently banished all Jews from Rome, as Suetonius says, on account of their always being in commotion.

V. 3.—CRAFT—A Talmudic writer says:

"What is commanded of a father toward his son? To circumcise him, to teach him the law, and to teach him a trade." Jewish proverb says "that whoever teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief." Abode—made his house. Wrought—worked. See Acts xx, 34, 35; 1 Cor. iv, 12; ix, 6; 2 Cor. xii, 9; 4 Thess. ii, 9; 2 Thess. iii, 9, 10. The Jews were said to have supported themselves by labor and trade. Tent makers—*Oikodæmæi*.—"The hair of a species of very shaggy goat, was in Cilicia wrought into a very thick stuff like felt, which was very much employed in covering tents," and Paul was a native of this same Cilicia.—Acts xxii, 3.

2. FOR GOD.—v. 4, 5.

V. 4.—Reasoned—as was his custom, see

chap. xvii, 2. Persuaded—see chap. xix, 26; xxi, 28; 1 Cor. v, 11. Greeks—that is, Greek proselytes who attended the synagogue; compare chap. xiii, 43; xiv, i; xvii, 4, 12.

V. 5.—Pressed in the spirit—rather, was

pressed (or held together) with the world. Wordsworth thinks Paul had never given up his trade, and was devoting himself entirely to preaching.

Among Paul's other labours for God during this visit to Corinth, he wrote the 1st and 2nd Epistles to the Thessalonians. The Epistle to the Romans was written on a subsequent visit. See Acts xx, 3.

II. PAUL RESISTED AND FEARED.—v. 6, 9, 10.

1. OPPOSED.

V. 6.—Opposed themselves—that is, set themselves in opposition. Those connected with the synagogue are meant. Blasphemed—reveling his words and his message; see chap. xiii, 45; xix, 9; compare Matt. xii, 40.—Compare Luke vi, 12, 20; viii, 40. Shook, &c.—Compare Luke vi, 13; Acts xii, 51; Matt. x, 14; also John iii, 36. Blood—that is, the consequence of your guilt; Ezek. xxxiii, 4-6; 2 Sam. i, 16; Matt. xxv, 25. I am cleared—see chap. x, 26, 27; 2 Tim. ii, 14; 1 Cor. x, 9; Rom. x, 1.

2. PRESSED.—v. 5. (See above.)

He was very anxious and cast down, for he needed all the encouragement given in verses 6, 10. Be not afraid:—No man shall set on thee to hurt thee.

III. PAUL ENCOURAGED AND PURSUING.—v. 5, 9, 10, 11.

1. THE ARRIVAL OF SILAS AND TIMOTHEUS.—v. 5.

V. 5.—And when Silas, &c.—Compare chap. xvii, 14, 15. From Macedonia—"the Roman province of that name, comprising northern Greece as distinguished from Achaia, or southern Greece. It is left uncertain, therefore, from what particular place Silas and Timothy arrived at this time."—*Hackett*. Paul had left them in Berea. He had sent for them from Athens, but left there before their arrival. They may have spent some short time in Athens, looking for him.

2. THE VISION.—v. 9, 10.

V. 9.—Then spake the Lord—see chap. xiii, 11. In a vision—*or, through a vision*; a form was seen well as a voice, was heard; chap. ix, 12; x, 3, 7; ix, xxii, 18; Matt. i, 20; ii, 19. Be not afraid—see 1 Cor. ii, 3; 2 Thess. ii, 17; Ezek. ii, 6; iii, 9; Jer. i, 17; &c. Hold not thy peace—be not silent.

V. 10.—I will be with thee, &c.—v. 11.

2. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

3. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

4. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

5. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

6. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

7. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

8. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

9. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

10. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

11. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.

12. EKOD, I, 2; JOS, I, 5; ISAI, xli, 10.