

Meantime he had a vision. The apostle at this time was, in one point of view, it would seem, as much of a Jew as a Christian in some of his feelings. But God disposed him by a miracle to go at the call of a Gentile. Peter took the guidance of the three messengers who came for him, selected six brethren Jews for company and help, and after two days' travel he reached Cesarea. There the apostle, to the astonishment of himself and all concerned, preached Jesus Christ to a household of Gentiles; and "after service" even associated familiarly with once hated Romans, and partook of their hospitality:

The apostle and his companions return to Jerusalem. A bitter complaint is laid against Peter. His old Jewish associates, members of the congregation, heard that Peter so far forgot himself as to go among Romans, and eat and drink with them. The apostle is compelled to defend himself, and he proceeds to narrate the facts, informing his prejudiced brethren that three miracles had been wrought by God in justification of what he had done. The head Gentile of the household he visited had received a call from an angel—he had himself seen a vision which opened up to him in figure how he was to act in the premises—and the Spirit came down upon the people whom God would have him recognize as fellow heirs of life by the Gospel. When Peter offered these explanations and made them acquainted with these details, his accusers at once changed their tone, and bursting out in religious rapture, exclaimed, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted the privilege of repentance unto life."

Observe—it was the opinion (impression) of the members of the Church at Jerusalem that brother Peter had done wrong, and they were forward to tell him so. Their Jewish prejudices were aroused; and they were fully convinced *in opinion* that Peter had committed a crime: but they had only the authority of opinion to sustain their charge against the apostle. They had no testimony from heaven, no authority from God, for their conviction. True, indeed, the old law had said something about such things, and, like some of the doctors in our day, they supposed that Moses and Jesus were to be heard alternately—that the law and the gospel were equally to be consulted under the reign of the Prince of Peace. But their opinion at once gave way when God's authority was brought clearly before their mind. They no longer accused Peter, and never again thought that the Gentiles were to be treated as the law directed. Faith took the place of opinion. *And faith produced harmony.*

There is another case which perhaps still more strongly exemplifies the character of an opinion when allowed to have force. Paul, when he had taken his first tour with Barnabas among Gentile cities, returns