

DISCOURSE.

TEXT Acts xix 20—" *So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.*"

On opening the New Testament, one of the first facts that rivets our attention, is the amazing success which followed the preaching of the gospel in primitive times. This remark is emphatically true of that portion of christain history recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*. The new dispensation was now fully introduced. The twelve shosen disciples, after having been throughly instructed in the objects of their future mission, recieved the last qualification for their work, when they were "baptized with the Holy Ghost." Bearing the commision of the Son of God, and guided by the divine Spirit, they entered upon a systematic and vigorous course of efforts to enlighten and save the world:

Nor did they labour in vain. On the day of Penticost, three thousand souls were converted and added to the church. Upon almost the next page of christian effort, the eye lights upon this cheering fact—that "many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand." And again, "the Word of God increased ; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly ; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." We have in the context a record of the transforming powers of the same gospel at Ephesus. The occasion of the excitement was, an attempt to perform a miracle in "the name of the Lord Jesus." which led to an event more impressive, if possible, than a miracle itself. "And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified, And many that believed came, and confessed and showed their deeds. And 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 God and prevailed." Facts of this character might be multiplied to a great extent ; but it is unnecessary. The declaration, that the gospel was clothed with peculiar power, in primitive times, that it evinced a practical and saving efficacy, under apostolic administration, which it has exhibited in no other circumstances, will not be denied. From the day of Penticost to the death of the beloved John, embracing a period of between sixty and seventy years, the gospel was preached in the most distinguished cities and pro-