

prefecture of Syria; one of the three great cities of the Greco-Roman civilization in the East. Not as brilliant as Alexandria in the cultivation of philosophy and letters, less prosperous than Ephesus and Alexandria in commerce, it surpassed them both in its political and military importance. It was the meeting point of the exclusive and provincial ideas of the Jew, and the broad and generous sentiments of the Roman empire. And this distinction it preserved up to the time of the Arabian conquest of Syria. It became for Christianity the principal source of missions and the cradle of Christian theology. Owing to the degree of political and religious liberty which it enjoyed, it was the fertile soil for the propagation of the doctrines of the Gospel, and the city of refuge for the oppressed and persecuted believers; and almost all the important events of the Church in these apostolic times are associated with its name.

BARNABAS.

The preaching of the Cyprits and Cyrenians at Antioch is the point of departure from the traditional exclusiveness which predominated in the principles and methods of the apostles; and this preaching is immediately connected with the stupendous mission of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. The Grecians here mentioned must not be regarded as Hellenists—that is, Jews who spoke Greek; first, because one would not find at Antioch or in the surrounding country Jews in any great numbers who spoke Greek, whereas we know that many Greeks did reside there; and, second, the conversion of Gentiles otherwise would not be an element in the narrative, and all that follows would lose its point.

The mission of Barnabas is to be explained by the surprise which was caused at Jerusalem upon the receipt of the news that Gentiles in considerable numbers were converted unto the Lord. It was a development in the program of Christianity difficult to believe, and provoking all manner of scruples on the part of the Church. As Antioch was the place, so Barnabas was the man, to bring into harmony these conflicting forces, and to establish upon quite different grounds than were contemplated at Jerusalem a reconciliation which, while it would be conducive to the peace and prosperity of the Church, would make clear the definition of the Saviour's command, "Go ye into all the world," and prepare the way for all that was to follow in the history of the church at Antioch.

The adaptation of means to an end is strik-

ing. Barnabas was himself a Cypriot; his culture strongly marked by the influence of Greece and Rome, he was not influenced in any great degree by the provincialism of Palestine. So his point of view was that of a generous and broad-minded observer who overlooks the distinctions which affected so powerfully his colleagues, and at once proceeds to organize and consolidate the movement among the Gentiles as an integral part of the Church. The study of the lesson turns upon the fitness of the place and the man to meet the requirements of a certain stage of progress. Here is found the evidence of the control of the affairs of the Church by the divine wisdom. Coincidence cannot account for it. The special guidance of the Holy Spirit was and is part of the equipment of the Church, and the determination of the Christian's duty and of the duty of the Church must be reached by this view of the progress of the kingdom of God in the world. Antioch was a divine selection of place; Barnabas, the divine appointment of the man. Barnabas is the historical link between the conservative and hesitating Judaism of the Church centered at Jerusalem and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. The inspired narrator is careful to note as part of the record what was already well known, but here repeated, doubtless as a defense of the part Barnabas took in the affair, that "he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

CHRISTIANS.

It is probable that this name did not originate within the ranks of the believers themselves, but was invented by the pagan inhabitants of Antioch; not by the Jews, for they would not give this title to the followers of Jesus, for the name was too closely identified with their own Messianic hopes. The Jews called the believers "Galileans," and "Nazarenes." But in the mouth of a Greek or Roman those who recognized a certain Christ as leader would be called Christians. It was the irony of history that the Gentile part of the Church, the part which hitherto was under the inconveniences and suspicions of the Jewish portion, because they were not of the elect, should give a name to the Church which, while it would properly characterize them, would bring no suggestion of the exclusiveness which was found in the names hitherto in vogue among the believers at Jerusalem.

PROPHETS.

The office of prophet appears quite distinct and peculiar in the history of the primitive Church. The name designates, as in the Old

CHARACTERISTICS.

1. It was made more that God set Church to do