

Of all mysteries of the human heart, this is perhaps the most inscrutable. There is no special loveliness in that gray country, with its rainy, sea-beat archipelago; its fields of dark mountains; its unsightly places black with coal; its treeless, sour, unfriendly-looking corn lands; its quaint, gray, castled city, where the bells clash on a Sunday, and the wind squalls, and the salt showers fly and beat. I do not even know if I desire to live there; but let me hear, in some far land, a kindred voice sing out, "Oh, why left I my home?" and it seems at once as if no beauty under the kind heavens, and no society of the wise and good, can repay me for my absence from my country. And though I think I would rather die elsewhere, yet in my heart of hearts I long to be buried among good Scots clods. I will say it fairly, it grows on me with every year; there are no stars so lovely as Edinburgh street lamps. When I forget thee, Auld Reekie, may my right hand forget its cunning!

The happiest lot on earth is to be born a Scotsman. You must pay for it in many ways as for all other advantages on earth. You have to learn the Paraphrases and the Shorter Catechism; your youth, as far as I can find out, is a time of louder war against society, of more outcry, and tears and turmoil, than if you had been born, for instance, in England. But somehow life is warmer and closer; the hearth burns more readily; the lights of home shine softer on the rainy street, the very names, endeared in verse and music, cling nearer round our hearts. An Englishman may meet an Englishman to-morrow upon Chimborazo, and neither of them care; but when a Scottish wine-grower whom I met in Western California, told me of Mons Meg, it was like magic.

From the dim shieling on the misty island
Mountains divide us, and a world of seas;
Yet still our hearts are true, our hearts are
Highland,
And we, in dreams, behold the Hebrides.

And, Highland and Lowland, all our hearts
are Scotch.—*R. L. Stevenson.*

COMMON-SENSE is an element in which many persons are sadly wanting. Common-sense implies sound perception, correct reason, mental capacity, and good understanding. It is not to be acquired entirely by education; it is a sort of instinct. It may be polished and made more acute by experience. There is a great deal of sound philosophy in a little common-sense sometimes, and the exercise of it upon certain occasions would save many men from much subsequent humiliation.

APOSTOLIC STUDIES, ON THE PRIMITIVE OR INFANT CHURCH OF CHRIST.

(17.) SAUL PREACHING CHRIST: Acts 9: 19-31.

ON Saul, the most impetuous Persecutor of the Infant Church, there was wrought a most wonderful change. He heard, and at once gave heed to the heavenly call. He is now a humble believer, receives Christian baptism, and is a member of the Church of Christ.

Of the mode of baptism adopted, no account is given in the Bible. It cannot therefore be viewed as a saving ordinance. Baptism, whether by immersion, sprinkling or pouring, is simply an induction into the Church of Christ, in obedience to the Divine command.

Saul gave evidence of a new heart and a right spirit, as follows, namely: 1st. He made CHRIST'S disciples at Damascus his companions; 2nd. He straightway preached CHRIST as the Son of God and the Messiah; 3rd. He made progress in the Divine life by growth in grace; and 4th. He persevered in self-denial and sufferings to the end.

These verses (19-31) cover the space of about three years, which were not spent altogether at Damascus. In Galatians 1: 17-21, he tells that he went to Arabia and to Jerusalem, then to Syria again, and afterwards to his native city of Tarsus.

Tarsus was the metropolis of Cilicia in Asia Minor, and was a distinguished seat of Greek Philosophy and literature; and, from the number of its schools and learned men, was ranked by the side of Athens and Alexandria. It eventually became a Roman colony, and on this account Saul enjoyed the right of Roman citizenship. It is now greatly reduced, and is inhabited by Turks to the number of 30,000.

The subject of Saul's preaching related to Jesus as the Son of God, the very Christ, the promised Messiah predicted as the Saviour of the world; the atonement He made for the sins of the human race, by His life and passion, His death, resurrection, ascension, and mediation. His eloquence was amazing. He was so successful that the Jews sought to kill him, not only at Damascus, but also at Jerusalem. At the former city he escaped by being let down at night over the wall in a basket; and at the latter city by being sent to Caesarea.

Saul's conversion removed a chief Persecutor, and the Infant Church had rest. Godly people were greatly multiplied during those three years.