

To worship. "The purpose was in itself an answer to each accusation—reverence not insurrection, conformity not heresy, worship not profanity." (Knowling.)

Vs. 12, 13. These verses flatly deny the charge that he was a "pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition," v. 5. *Neither.... disputing.* He did not stir up strife by opposing the religious views of the Jews or discussing his own. *Neither raising up the people.* In no place was he creating any disturbance. The Jews had themselves raised the turmoil, ch. 21: 27, 28. *Neither can they prove;* having denied the first accusation, he now challenges them to give their proof, vs. 14, 15.

Vs. 15, 16. *But this I confess.* The second charge (v. 5) of belonging to the "sect of the Nazarenes" he admits, with explanation. *That after the way;* the Christian faith, ch. 9: 2. *Which they call a sect* (Rev. Ver.); a reference to the phrase of Tertullus, v. 5. Paul does not admit that Christians were a "sect," that is, a part cut off or separated from the Jews, but claims that they were worshippers in another and better way of the same God as the Jews. *Which they themselves also allow.* The Pharisees, but not the Sadducees, believed in the resurrection. *The just and the unjust;* all classes and conditions of men. Paul thus shows, in reply to the second charge, that he, as a Christian, was at one with the Jews in believing in their God, their scriptures and their Messiah. *And herein;* that is, in the worship, faith and hope of vs. 14, 15. "While holding this faith and because I hold it, I try to keep my conscience

clear." (Cambridge Bible.) *I also* (Rev. Ver.); as well as the Jews—*Exercise myself;* discipline, train myself. *To have a conscience void of offence.* The apostle's whole aim in life was a sufficient answer to the charges brought against him.

Paul next meets the third charge of profaning the temple (v. 6) by stating what had really happened at Jerusalem. Felix then adjourned the court, vs. 17-23.

II. The Decision Postponed, 24-26.

Vs. 24-26. *Felix came;* probably after having been away from the city for a few days. *Drusilla;* the daughter of Herod Agrippa I., ch. 12: 23, and sister of Herod Agrippa II., ch. 25: 13. Felix had induced her to leave her own husband and become his wife. *He sent for Paul;* to satisfy his own and his wife's curiosity. *Heard him concerning the faith in Christ.* Paul would urge, not only belief in the Christ or Messiah for whose coming all Jews were looking, but also acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. *Righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.* A holy life is the only preparation for the judgment seat of Christ. *Felix trembled.* His own conduct was condemned by Paul's words, for it had been mean, cruel and licentious. *Go thy way.* He dismissed the preacher instead of his sins. *That money should have been given him.* The mention of "alms" (v. 17) may have suggested the idea that Paul was able to purchase his freedom. Besides, Felix saw that the apostle had friends, who might be prepared to furnish money for Paul's deliverance. His greed was therefore aroused.

APPLICATION

Answer for myself, v. 10. It is both a right and a duty to defend our character against attack—a right, because our good name is our most precious possession, and he who seeks to rob us of it injures us more than the thief who steals only our property;—a duty, because our influence for good over others depends chiefly upon our maintaining an unblemished reputation. The best defence of the innocent man is the record of his life.

This I confess unto thee, v. 14. Some are ashamed to belong to a small church which has little influence and wealth. Others are

ashamed to confess their religion among those who make no profession of their faith; they desire to be as much like their worldly friends as it is possible to be. The confession of our faith in Christ is most to our honor when it is made in spite of great difficulties.

Hope toward God, v. 15. While hope lasts, we need not fear anything at all. Some hopes, however, are built upon a false foundation. The world is full of changes which may destroy our work and thwart our plans, and at last death will end all. But the Christian's hope is in God who has been the