

SERMON.

ACTS XX. 37-8.

"And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship."

THE latter part of this Chapter is one of the most interesting portions of the Acts of the Apostles, and presents to us the great St. Paul in a very instructive and edifying point of view. He had been, and then was on one of his extensive visitations of the Christian communities which had sprung up, in such large numbers, under his Divinely blessed labours. Scattered as these were over the then known world, and far inferior to what we now have, as were the facilities of moving from place to place, it is truly astonishing to consider the length and variety of the journeys performed by this eminent servant of Christ. Truly when we reflect upon this, and consider further, that all he did was in the face of dangers, persecutions and death, we may enter into the full force of his own declaration, "I have laboured more abundantly than they all."

In the Chapter before us he recounts some of his many labours.

Being now at Miletus, in the vicinity of Ephesus, he sent for the neighbouring Presbyters or Elders to meet him there, and enters upon a brief review of his ministerial course among them.—

"Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.

"Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews.

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publiely, and from house to house,

"Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

But all these labours, and all this preaching of life-giving truths, were now drawing to their close. He tells them—

"And now, behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there,

"Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."

But far from being deterred by prospects like these, from pursuing the path of duty—far from regretting that he had chosen a path where things so uneasy to flesh and blood were to be found, he adds in the language of surpassing faith and confidence,—

• "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto