

dition of salvation; forgiven, renewed, and made a child of God. (7) *There is but one way, and that is an easy way, for every man to be saved.* **And thy house.** Not that his family could be saved merely by his act, but that his faith would influence theirs. (8) *No man goes to heaven or hell alone.*

**32. They spake.** This was after the lights had been brought, the prisoners led out of the corridor into the jailer's quarters and his family gathered about him. **The word of the Lord.** An account of the way of salvation presented in a brief but clear manner. **To all . . . in his house.** His family, the under jailers, and perhaps some of the prisoners, were gathered in the company.

**33. Washed their stripes.** The wounds of the prisoners had remained thus far unwashed and undressed; now the clotted blood was washed away

and they received careful ministrations from grateful hands. **Was baptized.** This was the token that he had taken Christ as his Master, and henceforth was to be recognized as a disciple. **He and all his.** In nearly every mention of baptism in the Acts we find the whole family baptized with its head, a recognition of the unity of the whole family.

**34. Into his house.** Which was connected with the prison. **Set meat.** Literally, "set a table." Paul and Silas had received no food since their arrest. **Rejoiced.** Now transferred from a cruel heathen into a joyous Christian. (9) *God's people are the only ones who have a right to be happy.* **Believing in God.** This expression would be used only of one who had been a heathen. Of a Jew it would have been said, "Believing in Christ."

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

**Verse 22. And the multitude rose up together against them.** Paul's experience at Philippi may have been a surprise to him after his vision of invitation at Troas. If so, however, he gives no hint of it either on this occasion or afterward in his epistles. He certainly learned sometime that a man cannot be a helper of men without suffering. Sin is sponged out only by the blood of the innocent. The witnesses of Christ's truth, as the word means, are "martyrs." Paul reckoned it a continuation of Christ's own suffering. (Col. 1. 24.)

**26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake.** In the first century of our era earthquakes were not infrequent in the neighborhood of Philippi. And they undoubtedly occurred by processes entirely natural. Our ignorance of seismic law, by which alone we might explain the phenomena, does not cloud our faith in the perfect immutability of the occurrences. But there are events in this particular earthquake which remove it so far from the sphere of the natural as to force the conviction that it was supernatural. The time of its occurrence, while the apostles sang praises; the loosing of the bands; no man harmed; the mysterious spell that held the prisoners within the apartments when the doors were all open, are an array of facts which have effectually silenced all rationalistic efforts at explanation. The only possible escape from the supernaturalism of the events is to deny the history. But he is a rash antagonist who attempts to transfer his point of attack from the sphere of the metaphysical to that of historical science. The earthquake occurring as it did, while the bleeding prisoners were praying in the lower dungeon of the Philippian jail, reminds us of the startling phenomena in the natural world when the Son of God "gave up the ghost." There is a closer connection between our spiritual state and nature's

processes than most men think. Paul speaks of the travail of all creation because of the suffering of the saints. Rom. 8. 22. The seven trumpets (Rev. 8. 9) proclaim a series of dreadful disasters in earth, sea, rivers, and air, because of the moral condition of the people. The moral and physical domains are so connected by secret affinities that moral decline compels earthquakes, siroccos, tidal waves, disastrous storms, cyclones, pestilences, plagues. There never has been any great moral convulsion in history without corresponding convulsions in the physical world. Renan in speaking of the period we are considering in these lessons describes at length the terrible disasters occurring in the natural world, and then says, "It was as if the globe and mankind were taken with fever simultaneously." These facts cannot be shooed away by the cry, "Superstition!" Science cannot ignore the bearing of man's spiritual life on physical nature; and its discoveries here, as in other lines of investigation, will bring knowledge more in line with biblical teaching.

**30. What must I do to be saved?** This was not an ejaculation of sudden fear, but, as indicated by the result, a cry of genuine evangelical penitence. The jailer was not seeking an escape from the earthquake, for that was already past; nor from official dishonor, which the escape of the prisoners might incur. The sword of the suicide would have relieved that. Besides, he was assured that the prisoners were all there. This was the distinct utterance of his innermost consciousness of sin and its peril. It is probable that up to that hour his guilt had no confessed place in his thought; certainly it was not an item in any formulated scheme of belief that he would acknowledge. But underneath all our acknowledged thinkings, in our deep subconsciousness where the Spirit of God works in man, there is an unerring truth which haunts the