

been so easily understood. "Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven." They were not mere transient guests drawn thither by the exigencies of travel and trade, but they dwelt there. They are supposed to have been attracted thither by the prevalent expectation of the Messiah. These pious people could not have been ignorant of what had recently taken place among them. They must have known a good deal about Jesus, they had heard, less or more, of the story of His life, they were acquainted with the facts of His death, and had heard the rumour of His resurrection and ascension. Is it too much to believe that many of these were in heart His disciples? Even in our own day, when it costs less to make a public profession of faith than it did then, there are not a few who, in the judgment of charity, are real disciples, though they have not formally connected themselves with the Church. But at that very time we know that "even of the rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it." It is scarcely conceivable that after all that had taken place in Jerusalem, to say nothing of the regions round about, that there were no other real disciples there but the hundred and twenty persons who apparently lived in community, and "with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer?" St. Paul, enumerating the proofs of the resurrection of our Lord, says expressly (1 Cor. xv. 6), "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once"; and where was this great gathering of the disciples more likely to have taken place than in Jerusalem? And is there anything unreasonable or violently improbable in the assumption that in it were a considerable number of these devout strangers gathered from the ends of the earth?" In that case the infant Church, formed by the Redeemer and His disciples during His life-time, instead of being composed of a handful of Galileans, as the ignorant multitude in the streets of Jerusalem evidently supposed, was really made of the first-fruits of the great spiritual harvest which was afterward about to be gathered in all lands. And if this theory be correct, it is no wonder that these people were confounded in view of the state of facts which the events of the day of Pentecost disclosed.

These were the people who, when the rumour of what had taken place in the upper room was spreading in the city, were first to be attracted to the spot. And there is nothing at all improbable in the idea that long before Peter's sermon began, or even the general concourse commenced, many even among those of them who had not previously joined themselves to the disciples had submitted themselves to God, made a public profession of their faith, and entered into the joy of the great salvation. And the testimony of a score or two of souls to what the Lord had done for them would account, on perfectly natural grounds, for what is commonly supposed to have been the effect of the supernatural endowment by which the disciples were enabled to speak, in the instant, a great number and variety of languages which they had never learned. It is not at all inconceivable that, in this way, every one present, to whatever nationality he happened to belong, might, even in the early part of the day, have heard someone declaring the wonderful works of God in his own language.

Besides, it is evident that the original followers of the Messiah were not the illiterate and ignorant sort of people that many at that time supposed them to be, and that the linguistic knowledge which they possessed, independently of this particular gift, might account, in part at least, for the