

Him. God's glory is His goodness, manifested to us in the grace of Jesus Christ. Moses was to return to God to the mount with two tables of stone hewn by himself, and then God would put Him in a cleft of the rock, and cover Him with His protecting power whilst He passed by, and showed to him His back parts but not His face—not His essence—(verse 21-23). The promise was fulfilled. (Chap. xxiv. 1-17.) Learn Dan. ix. 10, which is a comment on these verses.

**AFTERNOON. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA.** (Acts xxv. 23; xxvi. 1-18). Festus was now the procurator, and Herod Agrippa II. King of Judaea. The latter came to Caesarea, and before him Paul was brought prior to his being sent to Rome. The king came with great pomp to the place of hearing, accompanied by his sister Bernice, and there was a large audience to hear the apostle. Festus introduces the matter to the king by telling him why his prisoner was there. (1.) The Jews had accused him. (2.) Festus had found in him nothing worthy of death. (3.) Paul had appealed to Caesar, and Festus had determined to send him. (4.) But he wished to have something more certain respecting which to write to Augustus (ver. 24-27). On this, Agrippa gave Paul permission to speak for himself, and chap. xxvi. 1-18 contains part of his defence. After a courteous introduction (ver. 2, 3) he proceeds to speak—(1.) Of his early life (ver. 4, 5). (2.) Of the accusation laid against him. He was judged for the hope of the promise of the Messiah made unto the fathers, unto which promise the twelve tribes earnestly (as the word means) serving God, hope to come (ver. 6, 7). In that promise he himself believed, and also that it had been fulfilled in the mission and resurrection of Jesus. Then (ver. 8) he appeals to all present, many of whom were Jews—why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?—that is, not Jesus only, or the dead in some distant period, but at any time. God's omnipotence is equal to the task. (3.) Further, he speaks of his pharisaic zeal against Christianity (ver. 9-11). (4.) He relates the circumstances of his conversion (ver. 12-18). The object of his mission is described as having reference specially to the Gentiles, for it was to *open their eyes*, and thus to awaken in their minds a desire for the truth; to turn them from darkness to light—that is, to convert them from heathenism to Christianity, and to deliver them from the power of Satan, whose servants and vassals they had been. Forgiveness of sin and eternal blessedness would be the consequences of such a change, which, however, can only be obtained by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The promise of Matt. x. 19 (the memory text), was remarkably fulfilled on this occasion. Paul spoke under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Nov. 18. Morning. THE PEOPLE'S OFFERINGS.** (Exod. xxxv. 20, xxxvi. 8.) The sin of making the golden calf had been forgiven, and now the people were again in covenant-relationship with God. Hence the Tabernacle was to be reared, and materials must be gathered for its construction. We have here, then, a beautiful picture. Many of the people's hearts were stirred up, and both men and women brought what they could—golden offerings, or offerings of fine linen and different coloured cloths, goat's hair, and the skins of rams and of badgers; silver, brass, and shittim wood. Some of them, such as the skins of animals, and especially of the sea-dog, as the word *badger* means, would be found in the wilderness, and others they brought with them out of the land of Egypt. Shittim wood was probably that of the *camel-thorn*, which grows abundantly in the peninsula of Sinai, and is almost imperishable. Then the women spun, in their tents, blue, scarlet, and purple fabrics from linen and goat's hair, an art which they had learnt in Egypt, and which now proved so valuable to them. *Blue* was a dye obtained from a shell fish found in the Mediterranean; *purple*, a dye from another shell-fish; and *scarlet*, a splendid dye, obtained from a small insect ("History of Moses," p. 287). But God gave special skill and wisdom to Bezaleel and Aholiab, both to work themselves and to teach others. Their former experience in cunning workmanship was now greatly improved. They were very clever in stone and wood-cutting, and no doubt produced some beautiful pieces of workmanship. Moses then called others to the work (ch. xxxvi. 1, 2), and Bezaleel and Aholiab received the materials from Moses, for each morning the people brought what was ready to him, and thus the work went on. But (vers. 5-7) they brought too much more than enough, and proclamation was made throughout the camp to this effect, and so the people were restrained from bringing. This was a fine display of liberality,

and it cost the people much. They made many sacrifices, but they made them cheerfully. It is a great blessing when people have a *mind to work* (2 Cor. ix. 7). "God loveth a cheerful giver." This is the memory text, but it is for the heart rather than the head.

**AFTERNOON. ALMIGHTY PRISONS.** (Acts xxvi. 19-32.) Paul continues his address before Agrippa, and speaks of his obedience to the heavenly vision. He was not *compelled* to submit. He preached in Damascus, then in Jerusalem, next in Judea, and lastly to the Gentiles, and in all cases his demands were repented, and works worthy of it (cf. Matt. iii. 8). The Jews had persecuted him, but God had helped him, and he continued to preach according to what Moses and the prophets had said, that the Christ, the Messiah, should suffer that He should be the first to rise from the dead, and that He should show light to the people—the Jews, and also to the Gentiles (vers. 21-23; comp. Isaiah liii., 1 Cor. xv. 23). At this point Festus rudely interrupted him (ver. 24), "Thou art beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad." The speech of Paul appeared to Festus mere folly, and he imagined that his prisoner was really out of his mind. The apostle's calm and dignified reply was enough to prove that it was Festus rather who was beside himself. With all firmness, but with perfect calmness and due respect, he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus," etc (ver. 25). His words were words of truth, but also of soberness, for the two things must ever be combined if we would speak in accordance with God's will. All Bible-teaching must be both true and sober. And Paul appealed to Agrippa. "Believest thou the prophets?" he asked; and, without waiting for an answer, he said further, "I know that thou believest." For Herod was an Idumean, and professed to believe in the religion of the Jews; moreover, he knew that the thing was not done in a corner, that the rise of Christianity was open and public. Agrippa was touched, and Paul perceived it. But the king's words do not mean that he was almost persuaded to become a Christian. Their import is, "Dost thou persuade me with so little?" (Luke xiii. 24). He spoke in jest, but he was not easy in conscience. It is a hard thing to persuade men, and especially great men and rich men, to accept Christ and His salvation. Some few are persuaded; more are but *half* persuaded; and many are persuaded, but only to become *almost* Christians. In this case not much was wanting, perhaps, to bring Agrippa to Christ, yet it was enough to keep him out of Christ, and to seal his doom. How sad was Paul's spirit at this moment, and yet how confident! "I am a Christian, and I wish all who hear me were such, *except these bonds*," and perhaps he lifted up his chain-bound arms. Agrippa could hear no more, and he put an end to the proceedings. He said, however, in effect, *This is a good man*, and intimated to Festus that if he had not appealed to Caesar he might have been set at liberty. Yes; but Paul must see Rome, and all was ordered by the Unseen Hand.

**Nov. 25. Morning. THE TABERNACLE SET UP.** (Exodus xl. 17-33.) This event took place on the first day of the first month of the second year—the sacred year—after the departure of the people from Egypt. This was the month Abib, and the day was the anniversary of their deliverance (see ch. xii. 2, xiii. 4). The work began thus:—The sockets were fixed, the boards placed in them and fastened with bolts, and then the pillars were reared for the curtains. Two coverings, one of rams' skins died red, and another of badgers' skins or the skins of the sea-dog, were used (ch. xxvi. 4), and thus the tabernacle was impervious to rain or dew. Vers. 20, 21 speak of the ark of the covenant, which was a chest made of acacia wood and covered with gold. Into it Moses put the testimony—that is, the two tables of stone (ch. xxvi. 18, xxv. 16)—and the mercy-seat he put above it, so that it formed the lid. This ark was placed within the holy of holies in the tabernacle, and was hidden by the veil (ch. xxvi. 31). On the north side of it, but outside the veil, Moses put the table of shew-bread, on which were twelve loaves, placed in two rows (ver. 22, 23). On the left side, opposite the table, was the candlestick, with its seven lamps, which Moses lit, and in front of the veil was the golden altar on which incense was burnt. Then another veil was hung, called "the hanging at the door of the tabernacle" (or in Heb. ix. 2, "the first veil"), which closed the entrance to the tabernacle (ver. 24-28). Outside the tabernacle, in the open space or court round about (ver. 8), was the altar of burnt offering (ver. 29), the brazen laver in which the priests washed their hands and their feet whenever they were about