

North Africa is mentioned again more than once in connection with St. Paul's voyage to Rome. Such are some of the New Testament references to the Dark Continent.

The first translations of the New Testament were the Syriac and early Latin ; both of them date from the second century. The early Latin version was made, not in Italy, as we would have expected, but by the Latin-speaking Christians in North Africa. Latin was their native tongue ; and, taught by the Spirit, they instinctively felt that they must have the New Testament in their own language. They felt as John Wycliffe did when he said that the ploughboy following the plough should have the Word of God in his own tongue. In these modern days of Bible societies and Bible distribution let it not be forgotten that the early Christians of North Africa took so noble a place among those who love and who read the Word of God.

North Africa is rich in names of great historical prominence in the early Christian Church. There is Origen, the famous preacher and writer of Alexandria ; Tertullian, the Christian apologist and defender of the faith ; Athanasius, whose life and work will be had in everlasting remembrance for the magnificent stand he was enabled to make against Arianism and in behalf of the glorious truth on which human salvation depends, of the true and eternal deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Athanasius, it is believed, was a Copt, a native of Egypt. Cyprian, who died a martyr, was Bishop of Carthage. And there is Augustine, Bishop of Hippo—now the town of Bone, in Algeria—the defender of the doctrines of grace against Pelagianism.

The early Christian Church in North Africa furnished many a name to the roll-call of the noble army of martyrs. Take as an example the well-known story of the two female martyrs of Carthage, Perpetua and Felicitas. These martyrs were put to death in the year 202 A.D., during a violent persecution under the Emperor Septimius Severus. Perpetua was only two-and-twenty years old. Her aged father was a heathen, and he tenderly entreated her to renounce Christianity in order to save her life. When she was about to be tried before the magistrate her father hurried to the prison and said, "Dear daughter, have pity on my gray hairs. . . . Look at thy brothers, thy mother, and thy aunt ; thy son, too"—an infant at the breast, whom to nourish in prison was her greatest solace—"who when thou diest cannot long survive. Lay aside that high spirit, and do not plunge us all in rain." With these words the old man threw himself weeping at his daughter's feet. When she was brought before the judge, suddenly her father entered, carrying the infant in his arms, and looking at her imploringly, said, "Have pity on the child." The judge, too, urged her in a similar manner, but in vain. Perpetua and her companions—three youths and Felicitas—were condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts. Shortly before the public spectacle her father came again and made a last appeal to his daughter, threw himself on the ground and ut-