

Yea, I have spoken,
I will also execute ;
I have purposed,
I will also perform."

Here is a short, majestic, sublime poem. It presents Jehovah as beyond comparison. He purposes from eternity ; and from the beginning of the ages forecasts and foretells the end, mysteriously predicting events absolutely without any precedent, not only unaccomplished as yet, but, humanly speaking, impossible of accomplishment. And yet the immutable, inscrutable God, with whom nothing is impossible, confidently says, " My counsel shall stand firm, and all human counsel cannot overthrow it, and all My pleasure shall issue in performance." Jehovah hints that He will not only do incredible things, but will use strange instruments, as when He calls from the East Cyrus, whose emblem and ensign was the golden eagle, whom He girded for his work when as yet he knew Him not. And so, from the very beginning of the world age, all God's works have been clearly and closely planned in His mind, and man cannot bring them to nought. Even opposers shall be made unconsciously cooperators, and prove themselves raised up, like Pharaoh, that God might in them show forth His power and by them execute His pleasure. While heathen gods are helpless and cannot help, silent and cannot speak, motionless and cannot come to the rescue, and have to be carried by their blind votaries, God will hear and help, and bear His people as in His own arms and on His own bosom.

The better rendering of the text probably is, " Saith the Lord, doing all things known from the age." But the great fundamental thought is essentially unmistakable.

This verse, as used in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, concludes a series of emphatic statements intended to present God before us as the one and only actor or agent in missions, all other seeming agencies being but instruments. In no one passage of Scripture is the *DIVINE FACTOR* made so prominent, and in so repeated forms. In chapter 13 : 1-4 we have the *birth-hour of missions*, and the *Holy Spirit is the one foremost personage in the transaction*.

" The Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Paul,
For the work whereunto I have called them.
So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed."

From this point on, the one great Divine power and presence are continually before us, and even Paul and Barnabas seem insignificant, like stars that fade in the sun's presence. It is the *Word* of God which is spoken. The *hand* of the Lord is upon Elymas, the sorcerer, in his blindness, and the *doctrine* of the Lord astonishes the deputy, Sergius Paulus. It is the *grace* of God in which Paul and Barnabas persuade converts to continue. It is the *command* of the Lord which is urged as the basis of missions ; it is the *decree* of God which is fulfilled in believing souls ; it is the *Spirit*