

men,"* — so their own historian styles them, — boldly avow their mission, and the Rulers at last recognise them as the former followers of Jesus; the alarmed functionaries endeavor to procure their silence by threats; thinking probably that with such men this would be sufficient. It is remarkable that though Jesus was of no higher apparent rank than his followers, the members of the Council never seem to have attempted, as in the case of his disciples, to gain their end by menace. They shrunk, awed, from the dignified demeanor and native elegance of the poor Carpenter's Son! "Never man spake like this man!" — was the exclamation of the men employed to take him into custody. No such *prestige* surrounded the poor Galilæan fisherman; nevertheless the Word of God "grew mightily and prevailed;" and very soon that word which had at first been whispered only in a closed chamber, was proclaimed aloud in the Areopagus of Athens, and before the tribunals of Rome, while the sinner in his pride of power and place trembled before the intrepid preacher of "temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come." ||

This preacher was a Cilician Jew, of good family, who had received a learned education, and profited by it. He was young and ardent; had begun by being a persecutor of the Christians, but was suddenly converted to their faith; and to his preaching more especialy, was confided the spreading of the gospel among the Greeks, for he had studied their literature, and was a proficient in the arts of rhetoric and disputation.

What the state of society was, which this able and bold preacher of the truth had to encounter and to amend,

* Acts iv. 13.

|| Acts xxiv. 25.