

greatly interested in him (ch. 27 : 43), may have spoken a good word for him and secured him this privilege. Very likely Festus also had sent a kindly report in regard to him. The indulgence granted to Paul was permitted by the Roman law to prisoners not suspected of very serious offences. *With the soldier that kept him*; to whom he was fastened with a chain. Different soldiers relieved each other of this duty, so that Paul would become acquainted with a large number of the praetorian guard, Phil. 1 : 12, 13 (Rev. Ver.).

V. 17. *The chief of the Jews*; the principal Jews of the city. Paul called them together to disarm their prejudices against his preaching by showing that the charges against him (ch. 24 : 5, 6) were false. *Committed nothing against the people*; against their rights and privileges as Jews. He had everywhere shown his desire that they should hear the gospel first. *Or customs*. He had attended synagogue and temple, and had not forbidden circumcision. Paul looked upon Christianity, not as opposed to the Jewish religion, but as a higher form of it, ch. 24 : 14. *Was delivered prisoner*. This was practically true, for though he had personally appealed to Rome (ch. 25 : 11), it was the treachery of the Jews (ch. 23 : 13-15) and the proposal of Festus (ch. 25 : 9, 10) that had compelled him to do so.

Vs. 18, 19. *Who*; Felix (ch. 24), Festus (ch. 25), Agrippa (a Roman ruler, though a Jew born, ch. 26). *Would have let me go*, Compare ch. 25 : 9; 26 : 32. *The Jews spake against it*. (See ch. 25 : 8, 9.) It would seem that Festus thought of setting him free, but the Jews opposed it, and then Festus made the compromise offer of ch. 25 : 9 which led Paul to appeal to Rome. This puts both Festus and the Jews in a very bad light. *Ought to accuse my nation of*. It was to protect himself, and not to accuse the Jews, that he appealed to Rome. The apostle describes with great courtesy and mildness the opposition of his fellow-countrymen.

V. 20. *For this cause*; to make clear his position and to remove all prejudice from their minds. *For because* (Rev. Ver.). He was not a traitor to the Jewish faith, but was rather suffering for it. *The hope of Israel*;

the Jewish nation. This hope was twofold : "(1) The expectation of the Messiah as bringing in the kingdom of heaven ; (2) The hope of a resurrection attested by the resurrection, which proved (Rom. 1 : 3, 4) that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God." (Plumptre.)

Vs. 21, 22. *Neither received letters*. They had received no information by special letter from Jerusalem about the case. *Neither any of the brethren*. They had received no oral message casually or otherwise. "There had been a very short interval between Paul's appeal and his departure for Rome ; he had been at Rome only three days, and so it is very possible that no report had yet reached Rome concerning him at this early season of the year." *This sect*. The Jews looked upon Christians as a division of Judaism, like the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. *Everywhere spoken against*. Although they had nothing to say against Paul, they had heard many false reports about the Christians.

## II. Work Begun, 23, 24.

Vs. 23, 24. *Appointed him a day*; to hear him expound his views of the Christian religion. *His lodging*. On his arrival at Rome Paul may at first have retired to a friend's house and afterwards rented an apartment of his own, v. 30. *He expounded*; argued from the scriptures, proving that the Messiah had indeed come. *Testified the kingdom of God*; bore witness to the fact that it is a spiritual kingdom founded by Jesus through His death and resurrection. He could give testimony both from scripture and experience, that Christ's kingdom is in the hearts and lives of men (Luke 17 : 21 ; Gal. 2 : 20), and not an outward, material kingdom such as the Jews expected. *Persuading*; trying to convince them of the truth of his words. *Some believed . . . some believed not*; the usual effect of the preaching of the gospel, 2 Cor. 2 : 16.

A few were convinced of the truth of Paul's words, but the great majority were not, and Paul, having applied to them the words of the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 6 : 9-10), turned to the Gentiles, vs. 25-29.

## III. Work Extended, 30, 31.

Vs. 30, 31. *Dwelt two whole years*. During these two years, he wrote the Epistles to the Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians and to