

xiv. 3. The citizens of Iconium were at length divided; "part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles"—which state of things fairly evinces that much labour had been bestowed in that place. An ill-bred Jewish mob broke up their efforts, and they made their escape and came to Lystra, a long way south and east of Iconium, and then to Derbe, in the province of Lycaonia, west of the province of Capadocia. The people in those sections almost if not altogether regarded Paul and Barnabas as divinities, and they had to be restrained from offering sacrifice to them.

From the city of Derbe they turn to retrace their steps, taking the same route they had come, re-visiting Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, &c., "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith." Back they go through the province of Pisidia, return to Pamphylia province, preach again in Perga, make their way to the city of Attalia, at which point they take ship and proceed to Antioch in Syria, their religious home. Thus they accomplished "a preaching tour" of some eleven or twelve hundred miles, occupying doubtless from a year and a half to three years. How much they were to receive per month and who guaranteed payment, Luke sayeth not! But this only by the way.

Now it is an instructive fact that among all the churches planted by Paul and Barnabas, from the time they enter upon their labours at Seleucia to the delivery of their last discourse in Derbe, they appoint not one elder. Churches are established without one ordained man among the members forming them! A sad fact for our modern clergy! During their return tour from Derbe and Lystra, on re-visiting the churches they had previously planted, along with the good work of confirming the disciples' souls, "when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord," Acts xiv. 23. Paul who afterwards gave such a particular charge to preacher Timothy to lay hands suddenly on no man, observed the like rule himself; and hence we do not find men ordained as elders among infant congregations as gathered together by the gospel when first preached. But after the gifts of the members had been tested, and their character, disposition, and general qualifications were developed in the working and practical duties of the church, a proper selection could be made—a selection of persons fit for the duties of elders. Before either elders or deacons were appointed in these good old days of apostolic custom, they were to be proved, 1. Tim. iii. 10. The word "also" in the passage to which reference is made, evidently shows that those entrusted with the eldership, officially, required to be proved as well as the brethren