
ACTS 14: 1 In Iconium, they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed.

Paul and Barnabas, having preached at Iconium with great success, are persecuted, and obliged to flee to Lystra and Derbe, Act 14:1-6. Here they preach, and heal a cripple; on which, the people, supposing them to be gods, are about to offer them sacrifices, and are with difficulty prevented by these apostles, Act 14:7-18. Certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, coming thither, induce the people to stone Paul; who, being dragged out of the city as dead, while the disciples stand around him, rises up suddenly, and returns to the city, and the next day departs to Derbe, Act 14:19, Act 14:20. Having preached here, he and Barnabas return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the disciples, and ordaining elders in every Church, Act 14:21-23. They pass through Pisidia and Pamphylia, Act 14:24. Through Perga and Attalia, Act 14:25; and sail to Antioch in Syria, Act 14:26. When, having called the disciples together, they inform them of the door of faith opened to the Gentiles, and there abode a long time with the Church, Act 14:27, Act 14:28.

Verse 1

In Iconium - See the conclusion of the preceding chapter.

So spake - Καὶ λαλῆσαι οὕτως. With such power and demonstration of the Spirit, that a great multitude both of the Jews, genuine descendants of one or other of the twelve tribes, and also of the Greeks, Ἑλλήνων, probably such as were proselytes of the gate, believed, received the Christian religion as a revelation from God, and confided in its Author for salvation, according to the apostles' preaching.

ACTS 14: 2 But the disbelieving Jews stirred up and embittered the souls of the Gentiles against the brothers.

Verse 2

Stirred up the Gentiles - Τῶν ἐθνῶν, Such as were mere heathens, and thus distinguished from the Jews, and the Greeks who were proselytes.

Evil affected - Ἐκκώσαν, Irritated or exasperated their minds against the brethren, the disciples of Christ; one of their appellations before they were called Christians at Antioch. See on Act 11:26 (note).

ACTS 14: 3 Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Verse 3

Long time therefore abode they - Because they had great success, therefore they continued a long time, gaining many converts, and building up those who had believed, in their most holy faith; notwithstanding the opposition they met with, both from the unbelieving Jews and heathens.

Speaking boldly - Παρρησιαζόμενοι, Having great liberty of speech, a copious and commanding eloquence, springing from a consciousness of the truth which they preached.

The word of his grace - The Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the doctrine of God's grace, mercy, or favor to mankind.

And granted signs and wonders to be done - For no apostle could work a miracle by himself; nor was any sign or wonder wrought even by the greatest apostle, but by an especial grant or dispensation of God. This power was not resident in them at all times; it was only now and then communicated, when a miracle was necessary for the confirmation of the truth preached.

ACTS 14: 4 But the multitude of the city was divided. Part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

Verse 4

The multitude of the city was divided - The Jews treated the apostles as false teachers, and their miracles as impositions; and many of the people held with them: while the others, who had not hardened their hearts against the truth, felt the force of it; and, being without prejudice, could easily discern the miracles to be the work of God, and therefore held with the apostles.

ACTS 14: 5 When some of both the Gentiles and the Jews, with their rulers, made a violent attempt to mistreat and stone them,

Verse 5

An assault made - Ὅρη, A desperate attempt was made by their rulers, i.e. by the heathen rulers of the people, and the rulers of the synagogue.

To use them despitefully - To expose them, bring them into contempt, and make them appear as monsters, or movers of sedition; and then to stone them for this falsely alleged crime.

ACTS 14: 6 they became aware of it, and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, Derbe, and the surrounding region.

Verse 6

They were ware of it - They were informed of the scheme, and of the attempt that was about to be made, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe; they did not leave the province of Lycaonia, but went to other towns and cities. Lystra lay to the south and Derbe to the north of Iconium, according to the general

opinion. Strabo, Geogr. lib. xii., tells us expressly, that Iconium was within Lycaonia, Thence are the Lycaonian hills plain, cold, naked, and pastures for wild asses. About these places stands Iconium, a town built in a better soil. Ptolemy also, Tab. Asiae, i. cap. 6, places Iconium in Lycaonia. How comes it, then, that St. Luke does not call Iconium a city of Lycaonia, as well as Derbe and Lystra? Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. v. cap. 27, solves this difficulty, by stating, that there was granted a tetrarchy out of Lycaonia, on that side which borders upon Galatia, consisting of fourteen cities; the most famous of which is Iconium. See Lightfoot.

ACTS 14: 7 There they preached the Good News.

Verse 7

And there they preached the Gospel - Wherever they went, they were always employed in their Master's work. Some MSS. of considerable note add here, and all the people were moved at their preaching, but Paul and Barnabas tarried at Lystra.

ACTS 14: 8 At Lystra a certain man sat, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

Verse 8

Impotent in his feet - Ἀδυνατοῦ τοῖς ποσίν, He had no muscular power, and probably his ankle bones were dislocated; or he had what is commonly termed club feet; this is the more likely, as he is said to have been lame from his mother's womb, and to have never walked.

ACTS 14: 9 He was listening to Paul speaking, who, fastening eyes on him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole,

Verse 9

That he had faith to be healed - How did this faith come to this poor heathen? Why, by hearing the word of God preached: for it is said, the same heard Paul speak. And it appears that he credited the doctrine he heard, and believed that Jesus could, if he would, make him whole. Besides, he must have heard of the miracles which the apostles had wrought, see Act 14:3; and this would raise his expectation of receiving a cure.

ACTS 14: 10 said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet!" He leaped up and walked.

Verse 10

Said with a loud voice - After this clause the following is found in CD, and several others, either in the text or margin: σοι λεγω εν τω ονοματι του Κυριου Ιησου Χριζου, I say unto thee, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, "stand upright on thy feet." This reading is also in several versions; and though it may not stand on such evidence as to entitle it to a place in the text, yet it is not likely that St. Paul would not have used the sacred name on such an occasion; especially as this appears to have been the usual form. See Act 3:6.

He leaped and walked - Giving the fullest proof of his restoration: his leaping, however, might have been through joy of having received his cure.

ACTS 14: 11 When the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the language of Lycaonia, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"

Verse 11

Saying, in the speech of Lycaonia - What this language was has puzzled the learned not a little. Calmet thinks it was a corrupt Greek dialect; as Greek was the general language of Asia Minor. Mr. Paul Ernest Jablonski, who has written a dissertation expressly on the subject, thinks it was the same language with that of the Cappadocians, which was mingled with Syriac. That it was no dialect of the Greek must be evident from the circumstance of its being here distinguished from it. We have sufficient proofs from ancient authors that most of these provinces used different languages; and it is correctly remarked, by Dr. Lightfoot, that the Carians, who dwelt much nearer Greece than the Lycaonians, are called by Homer, βαρβαροφωνοι, people of a barbarous or strange language; and Pausanias also called them Barbari. That the language of Pisidia was distinct from the Greek we have already seen, note on Act 13:15. We have no light to determine this point; and every search after the language of Lycaonia must be, at this distance of time, fruitless.

The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men - From this, and from all heathen antiquity, it is evident:

1. That the heathen did not consider the Divine nature, how low soever they rated it, to be like the human nature.
2. That they imagined that these celestial beings often assumed human forms to visit men, in order to punish the evil and reward the good. The Metamorphoses of Ovid are full of such visitations; and so are Homer, Virgil, and other poets. The angels visiting Abraham, Jacob, Lot, etc., might have been the foundation on which most of these heathen fictions were built.

The following passage in Homer will cast some light upon the point: - Και τε Θεοι, ξεινοισιν εοικότες αλλοδαποισι, Παντοιοι τελεθοντες, επιζρωφωσι πολλας, Ανθρωπων υβριν τε και ευνομιην εφορωντες.

Hom. Odyss. xvii. ver. 485.

For in similitude of strangers oft,

The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,

Repair to populous cities, where they mark

The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.

Cowper.

Ovid had a similar notion, where he represents Jupiter coming down to visit the earth, which seems to be copied from Genesis, Gen 18:20, Gen 18:21 : And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me: and if not, I will know.

Contigerat nostras infamia temporis aures:

Quam cupiens falsam, summo delabor Olympo.

Et deus humana lustris sub imagine terras.

Longa mora est, quantum noxae sit ubique repertum,

Enamerare: minor fuit ipsa infamia vero.

Metam. lib. i. ver. 211.

The clamours of this vile, degenerate age,

The cries of orphans, and the oppressor's rage,

Had reached the stars: "I will descend," said I,

In hope to prove this loud complaint a lie.

Disguised in human shape, I traveled round

The world, and more than what I heard, I found.

Dryden.

It was a settled belief among the Egyptians, that their gods, sometimes in the likeness of men, and sometimes in that of animals which they held sacred, descended to the earth, and traveled through different provinces, to punish, reward, and protect. The Hindoo Avatars, or incarnations of their gods, prove how generally this opinion had prevailed. Their Poorana are full of accounts of the descent of Brahma, Vishnoo, Shiva, Naradu, and other gods, in human shape. We need not wonder to find it in Lycaonia.

ACTS 14: 12 They called Barnabas "Jupiter", and Paul "Mercury", because he was the chief speaker.

Verse 12

They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius - The heathens supposed that Jupiter and Mercury were the gods who most frequently assumed the human form; and Jupiter was accustomed to take Mercury with him on such expeditions. Jupiter was the supreme god of the heathens; and Mercury was by them considered the god of eloquence. And the ancient fable, from which I have quoted so largely above, represents Jupiter and Mercury coming to this very region, where they were entertained by Lycaon, from whom the Lycaonians derived their name. See the whole fable in the first book of Ovid's Metamorphoses. As the ancients usually represented Jupiter as rather an

aged man, large, noble, and majestic; and Mercury young, light, and active, the conjecture of Chrysostom is very probable, that Barnabas was a large, noble, well-made man, and probably in years; and St. Paul, young, active, and eloquent; on which account, they termed the former Jupiter, and the latter Mercury. That Mercury was eloquent and powerful in his words is allowed by the heathens; and the very epithet that is applied here to Paul, ἡν ὁ ἡγούμενος του λογου, he was the chief or leader of the discourse, was applied to Mercury. So Jamblichus de Myster. Init. Θεος ὁ των λογων ἡγεμων ὁ Ἑρμης. And Macrobius, Sat. i. 8: Scimus Mercurium vocis et sermonis potentem. We know that Mercury is powerful both in his voice and eloquence. With the Lycaonians, the actions of these apostles proved them to be gods; and the different parts they took appeared to them to fix their character, so that one was judged to be Jupiter, and the other Mercury.

ACTS 14: 13 The priest of Jupiter, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and would have made a sacrifice along with the multitudes.

Verse 13

Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city - There is a meaning here, which ordinary readers will not readily apprehend. Many cities were put under the protection of a particular deity; and the image of that deity placed at the entrance, to signify that he was the guardian and protector. To this St. Luke, every where as accurate as he is circumstantial, refers. Lystra, it appears, was under the guardianship of Jupiter Propulsius, Διος προπυλαιου, which St. Luke translates, του Διος οντος της πολεως, the Jupiter that was before the city, which is another term for Jupiter Custos, or Jupiter the guardian. All these deities, according to the attributes they sustained, had their peculiar priests, rites, and sacrifices; and each a peculiar service and priest for the office he bore; so that Jupiter Brontes, Jupiter the thunderer, had a different service from Jupiter Custos, Jove the guardian. Hence we can see with what accuracy St. Luke wrote: the person who was going to offer them sacrifices was the priest of Jupiter Custos, under whose guardianship the city of Lystra was, and whom the priest supposed had visited the city in a human form; and Barnabas, probably for the reasons already assigned, he imagined was the person; and as Mercury, the god of eloquence, was the general attendant of Jupiter, the people and the priest supposed that Paul, who had a powerful, commanding eloquence, was that god, also disguised. A beautiful figure of such an image of Jupiter as, I suppose, stood before the gate of Lystra, still remains; and a fine engraving of it may be seen in Gruter's Inscriptions, vol. i. p. xx. Jupiter is represented naked, sitting on a curule or consular chair; in his right hand he holds his thunder, and a long staff in his left; at his right, stands the eagle prepared for flight; and, above, the winged cap and caduceus of Mercury. On the base is the inscription, Iuppiter Custos Domus Aug. Jupiter, the guardian of the house of Augustus. As the preserver or guardian of towns, he was generally styled Jupiter Custos, Serenus and Servator. His name, Jupiter, i.e. jurans pater, the helping father, entitled him, in those days of darkness, to general regard. On this false god, who long engrossed the worship of even the most enlightened nations on the earth, much may be seen in Lactantius, Divinar. Institution. lib. i., in the Antiquite expliquee of Montfaucon; and various inscriptions, relative to his character as guardian, etc., may be seen in Gruter, as above.

Oxen and garlands - That is, oxen adorned with flowers, their horns gilded, and neck bound about with fillets, as was the custom in sacrificial rites. They also crowned the gods themselves, the priests, and gates of the temples, with flowers. Of this method of adorning the victims, there are numerous examples in the Greek and Latin writers. A few may suffice. Thus Ovid: -

Victima labe carens et praestantissima forma

Sistitur ante aras; et vittis praesignis et auro.

Ovid, Met. lib. xv. ver. 130.

The fairest victim must the powers appease,

So fatal 'tis sometimes too much to please:

A purple filet his broad brow adorns

With flowery garlands, crown, and gilded horns.

Dryden.

Huic Anius niveis circumdata tempora vittis

Concutiens, et tristis ait; -

Ibid. lib. xiii. ver. 643.

The royal prophet shook his hoary head,

With fillets bound; and, sighing, thus he said -

Calcott. - foveat ignibus aras,

Muneribus deos implet: feriuntque secures

Colla torosa boum victorum cornua vittis.

Ibid. lib. vii. ver. 427.

Rich curling fumes of incense feast the skies,

A hecatomb of voted victims dies,

With gilded horns, and garlands on their head,

In all the pomp of death to th' altar led.

Tate.

Virgil also refers to the same rites and circumstances: -

Saepe in honore deum medio stans hostia ad aram

Lanea dum nivea circumdatur infula vitta,

Inter cunctantes cecidit moribunda ministros.

Virg. Georg. lib. iii. ver. 486.

The victim ox that was for altars pressed,

Trimmed with white ribbons, and with garlands dressed,

Sunk of himself, without the god's command,

Preventing the slow sacrificer's hand.

Dryden.

Many similar examples may be seen in Wetstein and others.

At the time of worship, the Hindoo priests place garlands of flowers on the head of the image. Whether the garlands were intended to decorate the oxen or the apostles, we cannot say; but in either case the conduct of the Lycaonians was conformable to that of the modern Hindoos.

ACTS 14: 14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their clothes, and sprang into the multitude, crying out,

ACTS 14: 15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to the living God, who made the sky and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them;

Verse 15

We also are men of like passions with you - This saying of the apostles has been most strangely perverted. A pious commentator, taking the word passion in its vulgar and most improper sense, (a bad temper, an evil propensity), and supposing that these holy men wished to confess that they also had many sinful infirmities, and wrong tempers, endeavors to illustrate this sense of the word, by appealing to the contention of Paul and Barnabas, etc., etc. But the expression means no more than, "we are truly human beings, with the same powers and appetites as your own; need food and raiment as you do; and are all mortal like yourselves."

That ye should turn from these vanities - That is, from these idols and false gods. How often false gods and idolatry are termed vanity in the Scriptures, no careful reader of the Bible needs to be told. What a bold saying was this in the presence of a heathen mob, intent on performing an act of their superstitious worship, in which they no doubt thought the safety of the state was concerned. The ancient fable related by Ovid, *Metam. lib. i. ver. 211-239*, to which reference has already been made, will cast some light on the conduct of the Lycaonians in this case. The following is its substance: - "Jupiter, having been informed of the great degeneracy of mankind, was determined himself to survey the earth. Coming to this province, (Lycaonia), disguised in human shape, he took up his residence at the palace of Lycaon, then king of that country: giving a sign of his godhead, the people worship him: Lycaon sneers, doubts his divinity, and is determined to put it to the trial. Some ambassadors from the Molossian state having just arrived, he slew one of them, boiled part of his flesh, and roasted the rest, and set it before Jupiter: the god, indignant at the insult, burnt the palace, and turned the impious king into a wolf." From this time, or, rather, from this fable, the whole province was called Lycaonia. The simple people now seeing such proofs of supernatural power, in the miracles wrought by Barnabas and Paul, thought that Jupiter had again visited them; and fearing lest they should meet with his indignation, should they neglect duly to honor him, they brought oxen and garlands, and would have offered them sacrifice, had they not been prevented by the apostles themselves. This circumstance will account for their whole conduct; and shows the reason why Jupiter was the tutelar god of the place. As, therefore, the people took them for gods, it was necessary for the apostles to show that they were but men; and this is the whole that is meant by the ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἀνθρώποι, men of like passions, fellow mortals, in the text, which has been so pitifully mistaken by some, and abused by others.

The living God - Widely different from those stocks and stones, which were objects of their worship.

Which made heaven and earth - And as all things were made by his power, so all subsist by his providence; and to him alone, all worship, honor, and glory are due.

ACTS 14: 16 who in the generations gone by allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways.

Verse 16

Who in times past suffered all nations, etc. - The words πάντα τα ἔθνη, which we here translate, all nations, should be rendered, all the Gentiles, merely to distinguish them from the Jewish people: who having a revelation, were not left to walk in their own ways; but the heathens, who had not a revelation, were suffered to form their creed, and mode of worship, according to their own caprice.

ACTS 14: 17 Yet he didn't leave himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you rains from the sky and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

Verse 17

He left not himself without witness - Though he gave the Gentiles no revelation of his will, yet he continued to govern them by his gracious providence; doing them good in general; giving them rain to fertilize their grounds, and fruitful seasons as the result; so that grass grew for the cattle and corn for the service of man.

Filling our hearts with food - Giving as much food as could reasonably be wished, so that gladness, or general happiness, was the result. Such was the gracious provision made for man, at all times, that the economy and bounty of the Divine Being were equally evidenced by it. He never gives less than is necessary, nor more than is sufficient. His economy forbids men to waste, by going them in general no profusion. His bounty forbids them to want, by giving as much as is sufficient for all the natural wants of his creatures. By not giving too much, he prevents luxury and riot: by giving enough, he prevents discontent and misery. Thus he does mankind good, by causing his rain to descend upon the just and the unjust, and his sun to shine upon the evil, and the good. Thus he is said not to have left himself without witness: for his providential dealings are the witnesses of his being, his wisdom, and his bounty; and thus the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, were clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, Rom 1:20. Therefore those who continued to worship stocks and stones were without excuse. These were great and striking truths; and into what detail the apostles now went, we cannot say; but it is likely that they spoke much more than is here related, as the next verse states that, with all these sayings, they found it difficult to prevent the people from offering them sacrifice.

ACTS 14: 18 Even saying these things, they hardly stopped the multitudes from making a sacrifice to them.

ACTS 14: 19 But some Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there, and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

Verse 19

There came thither certain Jews from Antioch - Those were, no doubt, the same who had raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, at Iconium and Antioch, before: they followed the apostles with implacable malice; and what they could not do themselves they endeavored to do by others, whose minds they first perverted, and then irritated to deeds of fell purpose.

And having stoned Paul - Alas! of what real worth is popular fame? How uncertain, and how unworthy to be counted! These poor heathens acted just like the people of Malta, Act 28:4-6. When the viper fastened on the hand of Paul, they concluded he was a murderer: when they found it did him no damage, they changed their minds, and said he was a God! When the Lycaonians saw the miracles that Paul did, they said he was the god Mercury: when the persecuting Jews came, they persuaded them that he was an impostor; and then they endeavored to stone him to death.

Supposing he had been dead - They did not leave stoning him till they had the fullest evidence that he was dead; and so, most probably, he was.

ACTS 14: 20 But as the disciples stood around him, he rose up, and entered into the city. On the next day he went out with Barnabas to Derbe.

Verse 20

The disciples stood round about him - No doubt in earnest prayer, entreating the Author of life that his soul might again return to its battered tenement.

He rose up - Miraculously restored, not only to life, but to perfect soundness so that he was able to walk into the city, that his persecutors might see the mighty power of God in his restoration, and the faith of the young converts be confirmed in the truth and goodness of God. It is strange that neither the young converts at Lystra, nor Barnabas, were involved in this persecution! It seems to have had Paul alone for its object; and, when they thought they had despatched him, they did not think of injuring the rest.

ACTS 14: 21 When they had preached the Good News to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,

Verse 21

Preached the Gospel to that city - Derbe, a city in the same province. See on Act 14:6 (note).

They returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium - Behold the courage of these Christian men! They counted not their lives dear to them, and returned to do their Masters work in the very places in which they had been so grievously persecuted, and where one of them had been apparently stoned

to death! The man who knows he is God's ambassador, and that his life depends on his fidelity to his Master, knows he has nothing but his God to fear.

ACTS 14: 22 confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many afflictions we must enter into the Kingdom of God.

Verse 22

Confirming the souls of the disciples - The word disciple signifies literally a scholar. The Church of Christ was a school, in which Christ himself was chief Master; and his apostles subordinate teachers. All the converts were disciples or scholars, who came to this school to be instructed in the knowledge of themselves and of their God: of their duty to Him, to the Church, to society, and to themselves. After having been initiated in the principles of the heavenly doctrine, they needed line upon line, and precept upon precept, in order that they might be confirmed and established in the truth. Though it was a great and important thing to have their heads, their understanding, properly informed, yet, if the heart was not disciplined, information in the understanding would be of little avail; therefore they confirmed the Souls of the disciples. As there must be some particular standard of truth, to which they might continually resort, that their faith might stand in the power of God, it was necessary that they should have such a system of doctrine as they knew came from God. These doctrines were those which contained all the essential principles of Christianity, and this was called The Faith; and, as they must have sound principles, in order that they might have righteous practices, so it was necessary that they should continue in that faith, that it might produce that obedience, without which even faith itself, however excellent, must be useless and dead.

Again, as the spirit of the world would be ever opposed to the spirit of Christ, so they must make up their minds to expect persecution and tribulation in various forms, and therefore had need of confirmed souls and strong faith, that, when trials came, they might meet them with becoming fortitude, and stand unmoved in the cloudy and dark day. And as the mind must faint under trouble that sees no prospect of its termination, and no conviction of its use, it was necessary that they should keep in view the kingdom of God, of which they were subjects, and to which, through their adoption into the heavenly family, they had a Divine right. Hence, from the apostles teaching, they not only learned that they should meet with tribulation, much tribulation, but, for their encouragement, they were also informed that these were the very means which God would use to bring them into his own kingdom; so that, if they had tribulation in the way, they had a heaven of eternal glory as the end to which they were continually to direct their views.

ACTS 14: 23 When they had appointed elders for them in every assembly, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

Verse 23

When they had ordained them elders - Elder seems to be here the name of an office. These were all young or new converts, and yet among them the apostles constitute elders. They appointed persons the most experienced, and the most advanced in the Divine life, to watch over and instruct the rest. But what is the meaning of the word χειροτονήσαντες, which we translate ordained? The word

ordain we use in an ecclesiastical sense, and signify by it the appointment of a person to an office in the Church, by the imposition of the hands of those who are rulers in that Church. But χειροτονία signifies the holding up or stretching out the hand, as approving of the choice of any person to a particular work: whereas χειροθεσία signifies the imposition of hands. "Zonaras gives the proper meaning of the word in the text, in his Scholia upon the first canon of the apostles, Νυν μὲν χειροτονία καλεῖται, κ. τ. λ. 'Nowadays, a course of prayers and invocation on the Holy Spirit, when one is initiated into the priesthood, and receives consecration, is called χειροτονία, cheirotomia, so termed because the bishop extends his hand over him whom he blesses, when he is chosen into holy orders. Anciently, the choice or suffrage was called cheirotomia; for, when it was lawful for the multitude in their cities to choose their priests or bishops, they met together, and some chose one man, some another; but, that it might appear whose suffrage won, they say the electors did use ἐκτείνειν τὰς χεῖρας, to stretch forth their hands, and by their hands so stretched forth, or up, they were numbered who chose the one, and who the other; and him who was elected by the most suffrages they placed in the high priesthood. And from hence was the name cheirotomia taken, which the fathers of the councils are found to have used, calling their suffrage cheirotomia.' St. Paul, 2Cor 8:19, intimates that St. Luke was thus appointed to travel with him χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, who was chosen of the Churches. Ignatius, in his epistle to the Philadelphians, uses the same term, πρέπον ἐστὶν ὑμῖν, ὡς ἐκκλησία Θεοῦ, χειροτονησαὶ ἐπίσκοπον, ye ought, as a Church of God, to choose your bishop." Much more on this subject may be seen in Sir Norton Knatchbull, who contends that cheirotomia implies simply appointment or election, but not what he calls ordination by the imposition of hands. I believe the simple truth to be this, that in ancient times the people chose by the cheirotomia (lifting up of hands) their spiritual pastor; and the rulers of the Church, whether apostles or others, appointed that person to his office by the cheirothesia, or imposition of hands; and perhaps each of these was thought to be equally necessary: the Church agreeing in the election of the person; and the rulers of the Church appointing, by imposition of hands, the person thus elected. See the note on Act 6:6.

And had prayed with fasting - This was to implore God's special assistance; as they well knew that, without his influence, even their appointment could avail nothing.

Commended them to the Lord - To his especial care and protection.

ACTS 14: 24 They passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia.

Verse 24

Passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia - See the note on Act 13:13.

ACTS 14: 25 When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

Verse 25

They went down into Attalia - This was a sea-port town in Pamphylia. Thus we find the apostles traveled from Derbe to Lystra; from Lystra to Iconium; from Iconium to Antioch of Pisidia; from

Antioch to Perga in Pamphylia; and from Perga to Attalia; and it appears that they traveled over three provinces of Asia Minor, Pamphylia, Lycaonia, and Pisidia. See Calmet, and see the map.

ACTS 14: 26 From there they sailed to Antioch, from where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled.

Verse 26

And thence sailed to Antioch - This was Antioch in Syria; and to reach which, by sea, they were obliged to coast a part of the Mediterranean Sea, steering between Cyprus and Cilicia; though they might have gone the whole journey by land.

Whence they had been recommended - for the work which they fulfilled - The reader will recollect that it was from this Antioch they had been sent to preach the Gospel to the heathen in Asia Minor: see Act 13:1, Act 13:2; and that they fulfilled that work: see in the same chapter, Act 13:48; and the circumstantial account of their travels and preaching given in this chapter.

ACTS 14: 27 When they had arrived, and had gathered the assembly together, they reported all the things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith to the nations.

Verse 27

Had gathered the Church together - The Church by which they had been sent on this very important and successful mission.

They rehearsed all that God had done with them - Not what they had done themselves; but what God made them the instruments of working.

And how he had opened the door of faith - How God by his providence and grace had made a way for preaching Christ crucified among the heathen; and how the heathen had received that Gospel which, through faith in Christ Jesus, was able to save their souls.

ACTS 14: 28 They stayed there with the disciples for a long time.

Verse 28

And there they abode long time - How long the apostles tarried here we cannot tell; but we hear no more of them till the council of Jerusalem, mentioned in the following chapter, which is generally supposed to have been held in the year 51 of our Lord; and, if the transactions of this chapter took place in a.d. 46, as chronologers think, then there are five whole years of St. Paul's ministry, and that of other apostles, which St. Luke passes by in perfect silence. It is very likely that all this time Paul and Barnabas were employed in extending the work of God through the different provinces contiguous to Antioch; for St. Paul himself tells us that he preached the Gospel so far as Illyria, Rom 15:19, on the side of the Adriatic Gulf: see its situation on the map. Many of the tribulations and

perils through which the Apostle Paul passed are not mentioned by St, Luke, particularly those of which he himself speaks, 2Cor 11:23-27. He had been five times scourged by the Jews; thrice beaten by the Romans; thrice shipwrecked; a whole night and day in the deep, probably saving his life upon a plank; besides frequent journeyings, and perils from his countrymen, from the heathen, from robbers, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren, etc., etc. Of none of these have we any circumstantial account. Probably most of these happened in the five years which elapsed between the apostles' return to Antioch, and the council of Jerusalem.

1. In reading the Acts of the Apostles we may have often occasion to remark that in preaching the Gospel they carefully considered the different circumstances of the Jews and the Gentiles, and suited their address accordingly. When speaking to the former, of the necessity of crediting the Gospel, because without it they could not be saved, they took care to support all their assertions by passages drawn from the Law and the Prophets, as every Jew considered those books to be of Divine authority, and from their decision there was no appeal. But, in addressing the Gentiles, who had no revelation, they drew the proof of their doctrine from the visible creation; and demonstrated, by plain reasoning, the absurdity of their idolatrous worship, and called them off from those vanities to the worship of the living and true God, who made and governs all things, and who gave them such proofs of his being, wisdom, and goodness, in the provision made for their comfort and support, that they had only to reflect on the subject in order to be convinced of its truth. And while, in consequence, they saw the absurdity of their own system, they would at once discover the reasonableness of that religion which was now offered to them, in the name and on the authority of that God who had fed and preserved them all their life long, and girded them when they knew him not. The Gentiles felt the force of these reasonings, yielded to the truth, and became steady followers of Christ crucified; while the Jews, with all their light and advantages, hardened their hearts against it, though they had no other arguments than what contradiction and blasphemy could provide! Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before them. Do not many, even in the present day, copy their example, revile the truth, take up with the shadow instead of the substance, and rest just as much in the letter of Christianity, as ever the Jews did in the letter of the law? This is a deplorable fact which cannot be successfully controverted.

2. We have already had occasion to note five years of a chasm in the apostolic history. God himself does not choose to have all the labors and sufferings of his servants recorded. Their recompense is in heaven; and it is enough that God knows their work, who alone can reward it. And yet every faithful servant of God will feel that the reward is all of grace, and not of debt; for the amount of their good is just the sum of what God has condescended to do by them. How studious are men to record the smallest transactions of their lives, while much of the life and labors of Jesus Christ and his apostles are written in the sand, and no longer legible to man; or written before the throne, where they are seen only by God and his angels. In many cases, the silence of Scripture is not less instructive than its most pointed communications.

3. We cannot consider the effect produced on the minds of the people of Lystra, without being surprised that a single miracle, wrought instrumentally by men, should excite so much attention and reverence, and that we should be unmoved by the myriads wrought by the immediate hand of God.

4. How difficult it is to get men brought to worship God, though they have the highest reasons and most powerful motives for it; and yet how ready are they to offer an incense to man that is due only to God himself! We applaud the apostles for rejecting with horror the sacrifices offered to them: common sense must have taught them this lesson, even independently of their piety. Let us beware that we take not that praise to ourselves which belongs to our Maker. Gross flattery is generally

rejected, because a man cannot receive it without being rendered ridiculous; but who rejects even inordinate praise, if it be delicately and artfully prepared!